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COMICS SCENE RETURNS with *Batman*'s **Jerry Robinson** and more in **COMICS SCENE #33, on sale March 23, 1993.**

WORD BALLOONS

The Waiting Game

Once again, in Hollywood, they're getting our hopes up. They do this every year, you know. A half-dozen of the hundreds of comic book/strip properties optioned for movies and television actually get made. And finally, after all the impatient waiting and important wondering, they show up on screens both large and small.

Like particularly pyromaniacal moths drawn to a flame, *any* flame, we just gotta see them. *Captain America. Fish Police.* The dreadful *Dick Tracy.* And as we watch, the disappointment comes crashing down. Look what they done to our heroes, Ma. Screwed 'em up again.

What's funny about all this—nothing, really—is not that Hollywood keeps making these projects and (re)making our heroes badly. Nope, it's that we keep thinking somehow that it is all going to *change.* Sooner or later, we say, they're gonna get it and realize just how to make those comic heroes work, faithfully and well in a different medium.

For two decades, first in fanzines and later in magazines, I've been following the transitions of our heroes to other media. And here I am, the most naive, perennial optimist of all. No matter what the evidence to the contrary—inane casting, inadequate budget, incompetent creators—I always think, pray, *try* to believe, that this time they'll get it right and those comic heroes will be the way they should be. To paraphrase *The Music Man,* "I always think they're gonna be good, kid."

Oughta have my head examined (for that and countless other reasons). Time and again, this happens. Time and again, you and I and others express hope—that most self-deceiving and ultimately pathetic of human emotions—for good stuff. And time and again, the magic doesn't work.

Of course, to begin with, it didn't work all that much. Just off the top of my mind, here's a short list of *truly good* adaptations of characters originating in comic books or strips: certain serials, none totally faithful (*The Adventures of Captain Marvel, The Phantom, Captain America*)...segments of TV's *Superman* (with George Reeves)...*Li'l Abner* (the Broadway musical and movie)...the *Peanuts* animated TV specials...certain episodes of TV's *Batman* (with Adam West)...a couple chapters of the incredibly unfaithful *Incredible Hulk*...*Annie* the Broadway musical (*not* the movie)...*Superman* and (most of) *Superman II*...the *Popeye* movie...*Batman* and *Batman Returns*...a handful of later *Superboy* adventures...*Garfield* and *Mother Goose & Grimm*...*The Flash* TV series...*The Rocketeer*...and of course, the animated *Batman.*

Yes, yes, I'm well aware that everything on that list—except maybe the *Peanuts* specials, faithful because creator Charles Schulz writes them himself—can be nibbled at and quibbled with by fans with grinds needing axing. Hey, let me do the debating for you: "Captain America *wasn't* Steve Rogers in the serial, you fool." (I know.) "Faithful? There were no costumed supervillains in *Superman*!" (Everything was at the dry cleaners during taping.) "*Li'l Abner*? You're *joking.*" (Well, no.) "Holy horrors! I hated that show! You *actually* think Adam West was good as Batman?"

The debate continues. I'll indent. "*Annie.* You *must* be joking." (Well, no.) "*Popeye? Popeye! Popeye!?*" (I disliked it, too, but they really, really, *really* tried to emulate E.C. Segar.) "Holy horrors! I hated those movies! You *actually* think Michael Keaton was good as Batman?"

"*Superboy.* You *have to be* joking." (Well, no.) "You're wrong! *Dick Tracy* was better than *The Rocketeer.*" (Oh yeah, which planet are you from?) "You never mentioned *The Lone Ranger, The Green Hornet, Tarzan* or *Zorro.*" (They originated on radio and in pulp magazines.) "Holy horrors! I hated those cartoons! You *actually* think Kevin Conroy was good as Batman?"

Despite all that's past and best forgotten, my hopes are again on the rise. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III* hits movie theaters next month while the touring *Annie Warbucks* opens on Broadway. *Dennis the Menace* and the video-game-originated *Super Mario Bros.* see release this summer. And cameras have rolled on *The Fantastic Four* (with *The Shadow,* among others, all but certain to be made). As always, more and more heroes are being optioned for TV, film and animation.

Maybe this time, they'll get it right. Maybe this time, our comics heroes will be good and strong and faithful and entertaining in their new media incarnations. Maybe this time, the magic will work.

And if not, we can always hope again. Next year.

—David McDonnell/Editor

LETTERING

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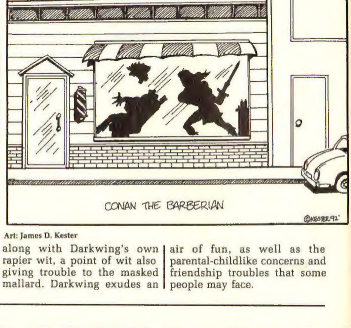
...I'm coming out of the closet! I am a truly die-hard *Darkwing Duck* enthusiast! Why? The show provides loads of nonsensical fun while it approaches themes of parent-child relationships and friendships. In the first episode, "Darkly Dawns the Duck," Darkwing (similar to a Silas Marner character) is a lonely duck bent on fighting crime with no one to cheer or comfort him; however, Launchpad McQuack and Gosalyn come into his life, and they help to change him into being a friend and a parent (moreso for Gosalyn, of course). While the other stories deal more topically with these relationships (i.e., "Toys Czar Us," "Slaves to Fashion," "Quiverwing Quack," etc.), parodies such as superheroes ("Tiff of the Titans," "Smarter Than a Speeding Bullet"), comic books ("Comic Book Capers") and TV series ("Twin Beaks") are sometimes focused upon.

The animation for the series does not always come up to perfection, but then again, the *characters* are the focus, not the scenery. The characters are vivid and believable. Has there not been a time when a parent can be overbearing or a child be rebellious? Darkwing makes the great example of the often-overly protective father, while Gosalyn exhibits much of her own stubborn, tomboyish nature. Launchpad provides, along with Darkwing's own rapier wit, a point of wit also giving trouble to the masked mallard. Darkwing exudes an air of fun, as well as the parental-childlike concerns and friendship troubles that some people may face.



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With these relationship themes and frivolity, not everyone has turned against the series. *Darkwing* gives laughter and great amusement to my friends and to myself. To add another point, claims that one series is better in quality than another cannot be justified. Different series and movies have different characters involved in resolving conflicts. It would be similar to comparing *Star Wars* with *Battlestar Galactica*. There are similarities in effects, but the main storyline is different. For this animation series, the characters find their own solutions to their problems. Comparisons do not allow for an individual rendering of how each character comes to find his/her own solution. Tad Stones and Alan Zaslove have carefully planned and created this series for the enjoyment of the viewing public, not for scrutiny of animation styles or storylines. These two ought to be praised for a truly remarkable accomplishment. Although the show did not win the Emmy for 1991 as best animated series, *Darkwing Duck* has won my heart with its brilliant stories and original characters.

Elizabeth A. Allen
Spencer, NC

...Batman: The Animated Series. Batman Returns shoulda been this good!! This cartoon show is really great! I was expecting another *Super Friends*, and in a way, I first thought it was going to be lousy when I saw the Catwoman episode on the Saturday morning preview. A poor script based on *Batman Returns*, with a very *Super Friends*ish "help the environment" theme. I thought, "Yeah, typical TV animation."

But then, I watched the Man-Bat episode.

What a wild ride! It was comic-book perfect! As were the Mr. Freeze and Clayface episodes (*Loved* the Batwing scene!!!) To hell with *The Simpsons*; tell Fox to put the Batman on primetime! Now if DC could only make Batman comics this good, we'll be all set. (Sorry, Denny O'Neil, your six years as editor have been the least enjoyable period I can remember).

Keep up the excellent work, guys. This is unquestionably the best animation TV has ever seen. You should release episodes to theaters as short subjects. Animation doesn't get any better than that!

Lee Solomon
Sterling Heights, MI

...I have some ideas that may get Stuart Gordon's *Iron Man* back on the table. Here they are:

1) Forget Doctor Doom. Doctor Doom is from a fictional Slavic country, *a la* "Cold War." The "Cold War" is over. Instead, use the Mandarin! With current social and economic woes between the U.S. and Japan, the Mandarin would be a perfect choice. "Everything is made better in Japan" would be one theme in the film, a line Mandarin could mock Iron Man with after kicking his butt the first few times. Another theme could be about Japanese corporate raiders and Mandarin's alias trying to take over Stark Enterprises.

2) Let Iron Man lose the first few battles; this keeps the villain(s) strong. Have Iron Man eventually ruin Mandarin's plans but have Mandarin secretly escape at the film's end.

3) Let Mandarin's rings still be from aliens. This will coincide with tabloid rumors that space aliens are providing Japan with all their technology.

4) Let Tom Selleck be Tony Stark, a struggling alcoholic with a heart condition. No one likes a perfect hero. This will make him believable.

5) Have ILM do the special FX, have the costume designers from the *Star Wars* films finetune the costumes for authenticity. No rubber suits or spandex! Use several sets of Iron Man armor, for different needs (plotwise) and to make all fans happy.

6) Have supporting characters. Have Justin Hammer appear along with the Beetle, Killer Frost and Spymaster. Have James Rhodes and Sunfire in supporting roles. Sunfire will provide a positive character to offset Mandarin's fiendishness, thus keeping the film from looking as if it is completely "Japan bashing."

7) Batman is referred to as the Dark Knight, Iron Man could wind up being the Techno-Knight. For a ironic plot twist, have Iron Man and Mandarin's weapons fail at the movie's end and have them engage in a no-holds-barred slugfest!

If Stuart Gordon is reading this letter, I hope my ideas are of help or inspiration. If Universal still isn't interested, find another studio!

Robert J. Repsher
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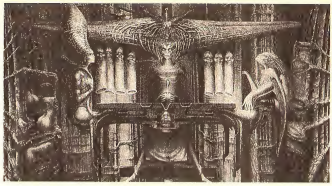

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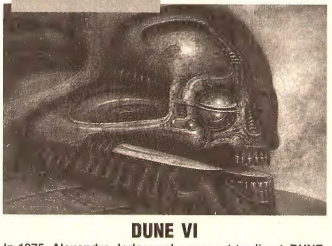

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ALL SHELLED-OUT

Those Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles are going back in time.

Look out! Those pizza-munching, sewer-crawling heroes in a half-shell are back for more adventure in the aptly-named *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III*. The $22 million movie, based on the characters created by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird, opens nationwide in March.

This time around, Leonardo, Michaelangelo, Donatello and Raphael—those four crime-fighting, color-coded Turtles—are tripping through time. They travel back to 16th-century Japan, on a mission to save their human pal, TV reporter April O'Neil.

It all begins innocently enough. While visiting the Turtles in their New York City subway den, April shows them an antique scepter. Suddenly, she's mysteriously transported back to the ancient Orient. Naturally, the Turtles hatch a rescue scheme that sends them through time, too. They arrive in the 16th century on horseback and promptly join forces with the rebels in battle against an evil warlord. When the warlord and his cohorts invade the village, Michaelangelo saves a child from a burning hut. Then it's time for lotsa samurai stunt action.

By BOB RUSK

This storyline differs greatly from the first two Turtles movies, where the green good guys stayed on their NYC home turf.

Tom Gray, producer of all three *Turtles* installments (GS #13, #19), thinks *TMNT III* is, by far, the best of the bunch. "This is not just a bashing movie," he says. "It's our best effort yet. It's a very interesting contrast between the urban Turtles and ancient Japan. There's a cultural clash, but we took great pains not to make anything offensive to the Japanese."

But why run the risk of a plot change at all? Why not just leave the Turtles in the sewers? After all, the first flick—released in 1990—racked up a $135 million box office, and ranks as the most successful independently-produced film of all time. The second *Turtles* movie also raked in the bucks ($79 million in 1991). Before making changes, the filmmakers carefully considered their audience. "Young kids see the Turtles as older brothers," Gray says. "The Turtles respect their elders, but also stand up for what they believe in. The kids identify with that."

Photos: Bob Greenberg/Copyright 1992 New Line Cinema

However, Gray believes the time is right to expand the audience beyond those pre-teenage boys who primarily want action and adventure. "Unfortunately, we've not skewed as well among young girls. But I think this film will appeal more to girls, because of actress Vivian Wu, who has a major role as the Japanese princess."

Gray expects the time-travel angle to appeal to older moviegoers. "We didn't reach as many teenagers in the second film as we got on the first," the producer admits. "We made a mistake. We made it a little more cartoonish, and lost some of our older audience.

"The first movie's humor was aimed at adults, because we knew we had the kids. So this time, we're going back to be more like the first movie.

"*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III* is a harder-edged film, a more adult film, but it still has everything for the kids," Gray continues. "There are many good action scenes, but *no* blood or gratuitous violence. It's like a *Terminator* for kids. The Turtles are Arnold Schwarzeneggers for kids."

Also in the *Turtles III* cast are Elias Koteas (from *Turtles I*), Paige Turco, reprising her *Turtles II* role as April O'Neil (STARLOG #154), and Mark Caso, who returns as Leonardo, the Turtle with the blue mask. The other actors playing Turtles are new to the series.

Gray isn't worried about any recasting. Who in the audience will notice? "The Turtles are the stars of these movies," he declares. "We've never set out to buy big-name stars to detract from what the Turtles do. Our audiences have come to believe that they're going to see very fine actors, who aren't necessarily big stars, but are very good at what they do."

Lost in ancient Japan, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles find themselves defending a village from an evil warlord.

All Turtles Characters: Trademark & Copyright 1982, 1993 Mirage Studios. Photo: Rob Rusk

Caso and his fellow Turtle actors, in full costume, parade for reporters during July 1992's lensing of *Turtles III*, on location 15 miles from the small town of Seaside, Oregon, near Saddle Mountain State Park. Although the first two *Turtles* films shot in North Carolina, Oregon provides the different "look" of feudal Japan. Using two loads of bamboo imported from China, crews spent 12 weeks building an authentic-looking Japanese village on a four-acre, logged-off section of the forest—1,300 feet up in the rugged Coast Range Mountains.

And that's where the Turtles meet the press in between scenes on a 90-degree summer's day. Caso slips out of his Leonardo head and talks about life inside the costume, which heats up to nearly 100 degrees and weighs about 50 pounds.

The actors go through rigorous training before shooting begins, he explains. "You have to sit in saunas for long periods of time, and when you want to get out, you can't—until you're in shape for the movie. You sweat to death, and have to hold your breath for long periods of time [inside the suit]."

Actor Jim Raposa, playing Donatello, echoes Caso's words. "It's hot. It's fun. It's sweaty. We just have fun inside the costumes, and try to see where we're going so we don't hit anybody!"

Watching the Turtles in action certainly makes their job look like fun, albeit hot, sweaty fun. "It's a blast!" Matt Hill, a.k.a. Raphael, proclaims.

And while some actors might not be too thrilled with a role requiring them to hide their faces inside costumes, it doesn't bother Hill. "As long as you remember that you're the one who brings the role to life, the rest is easy," he says. "Everything flies."

Well, it's really a little more complicated than that. Nothing flies if something goes awry inside one of the costumes, which are technological wonders, handcrafted out of foam latex.

It took 60 people and $2.8 million to create this movie's Turtle wear. Eric Allard, owner of California-based All Effects, serves as the film's Creature FX Supervisor.

For *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III*, Allard and his crew crafted 72 Turtle costumes, complete with a sophisticated array of electronic components. Inside each costume's head are 16 computerized parts. The actors, whose own heads are crowded against the computer parts inside the costumes, don't control their own facial movements. That falls to the puppeteers located on the set just out of camera range. The puppeteers, using remote control and TV monitors, direct the computerized heads' movements.

Explaining why machinery is needed, Allard notes, "The Turtles' faces don't correlate to actors' faces. It's not like *Planet of the Apes*, where you can use the actors' eyes and then put on a mouth.

"The Turtles were designed to be completely *unhuman*-looking. Because their mouths and eyes are so big, they have all the elements of cartoon characters. The only way to get the movement we needed was to have real big, broad movements, and a human being just can't do that."

In addition to the electronic hardware for the head movement, there are two audio lines inside each head. They enable the actors to communicate with the puppeteers and the writer/director, Stuart Gillard, while listening to the dialogue of the other Turtle actors.

Allard, whose other creations include the robot, Number Five, from *Short Circuit* and the rabbit in the Energizer Battery commercials, points out that so many costumes are required for *Turtles III* simply because of the stress they're subjected to during lensing.

Adds creature FX co-supervisor Rick Stratton, "When the actors are in full Turtle costume, they can go through one suit in half a day. It's drenched with sweat by lunchtime.

"The actors want the suits off, they want showers and then fresh costumes. So, they go through two suits a day when they're in full costume."

Each of the four Turtle actors have eight costumes apiece, as does the lone Turtle stuntman, who has eight costumes, plus the four different Turtle heads.

Even though the Turtle actors mouth the scripted dialogue during filming, their voices aren't heard on screen. Voice artists, who speak perfect Turtle-ese, loop the lines later.

With the voices recorded and everything else done, the Turtles are again prepared to invade theaters, shouting "Cowabunga!" all the way.

Photo: Bob Rack

Though the costumes are hot and sweaty, "it's a blast!" exclaims Raphael's alter-ego Matt Hill.

Creature FX co-supervisor Rick Stratton notes, "The actors go through two suits a day," as he makes some head adjustments on Leonardo.

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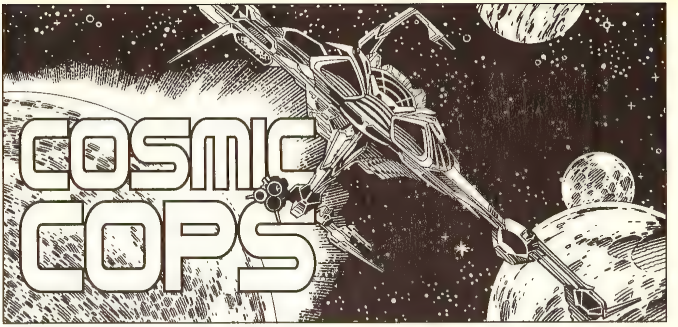


Crime is universal. That's one of the theories behind *Darkstars*, a new DC series following the adventures of Ferrin Colos, a Darkstar who has one of the toughest beats in the galaxy— Earth.

Where the heroes of the Green Lantern Corps are akin to Arthurian knights in shining armor, Darkstars are cops with cosmic powers. And, just like real police officers, they suffer from extraordinary job stress.

"In law enforcement, people burn out, they lose fights, and some get bitter and disillusioned," says writer Michael Jan Friedman, best known for his work on *Star Trek* and *Star Trek: The Next Generation* comics and novels. "Colos is going through all of that. The grittiness, the *Hill Street Blues* feeling, is something I wanted to get into [in the series]."

Colos wasn't always on the verge of self-destruction. Friedman says his hero started off as idealistic and ambitious as any big-city rookie.

"What made him a Darkstar originally was his planet being decimated by alien raiders. He was idealistic and hopeful, and that's why he became a Darkstar. Now, with the nearest Darkstar entire star systems away, he's pretty much cut off from anyone who really understands him and shares his larger view of things. His only family right now is the circle of natives he gathers around himself."

Fighting crime in this galaxy looks like a job for the "Darkstars."

By DREW BITTNER

Colos gets involved with a variety of people—including a cop, a homeless man, a lawyer for a major crime lord in Dallas and a nun. Some of them become his deputies, invested with part of his Darkstar power and thus enlisting in his ongoing battle against crime. In the process, their world changes drastically.

"His deputies go through all kinds of change as a result of working with Colos," Friedman says. "They're each faced with a struggle and they look to Colos, ironically, as a figure of hope, while he sees himself as anything but that. I wanted to make it complex and have many emotional issues in the series. We'll see events through the eyes of both Colos and his deputies, and get involved in many social issues.

"One deputy, Mo, is a homeless man who sees all kinds of possibilities as a result of being deputized. His world turns around completely. And Flint, a hardcore vice cop, finds he's still frustrated, because, even with a deputy's powers, he can't wipe out crime as much as he would like to. Our third supporting character, Carla, is a successful black, female lawyer, who finds that everything she believed in is a sham, leaving her disillusioned."

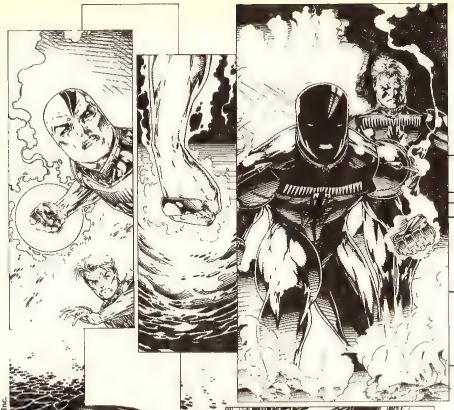
Colos' status as a resident alien means he has a great deal to learn about life on Earth. And much of it puzzles him.

"In an upcoming issue, Carla takes him to a redneck bar and says that once, not long ago, she probably wouldn't have been allowed in there because of the color of her skin," the writer explains. "and Colos asks, 'What do you mean?' She says he must have encountered prejudice like that in his travels, but he hasn't. The idea is completely foreign to him."

Friedman says that elevating racial prejudice from the arguable to the absurd is possible with a character like Colos, an outsider who has a vastly different perspective from humans. However, prejudice isn't the *only* idea that's alien to this visitor.

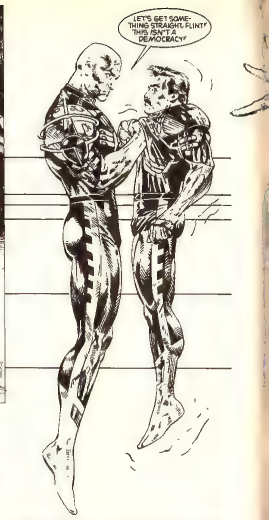
"The idea of homelessness is also foreign to him," the writer notes. "Drug abuse and illegal drugs are not. In fact,

Darkstars Art: Travis Charest/Scott Hanna



All Darkstars Characters & Art: Trademark & Copyright 1993 DC Comics Inc.

"Green Lanterns with attitudes," the Darkstars administer their own brand of interplanetary justice.



Flint's the vice cop with Darkstar powers, but "he's still frustrated because he can't wipe out crime as much as he would like to," says writer Michael Jan Friedman.

he originally comes to Earth because he's chasing alien drug smugglers."

Darkstars was basically created over a lunch meeting with DC editors Robert Greenberger and Brian Augustyn when discussion turned to possible new series for Friedman. The writer says he "was inspired by the *Green Lantern Corps*. That was always my favorite book growing up and I collected it almost from the first issue 30 years ago. The whole 'shining knight' ideal, and having this entire group of similar heroes in the background, was an amazing concept. I wanted to do *Green Lantern* or something like it, after I had proven myself at DC, but the book had just been taken by another writer [Gerard Jones], so it was unavailable. During lunch, I was asked what it was about the Green Lanterns that really grabbed me, and could I use that as a springboard to something else?"

Looking at it from that angle, Friedman says, ideas formed quickly. "I thought that if I were doing *Green Lantern* from scratch, I would go back to the origin story. My personal take, first of all, is that the Guardians of the Universe are a little difficult to believe as they've been done. They're completely altruistic, which can be hard to swallow. From the beginning, I thought we would give the Guardian-like powers behind the Darkstars a more selfish agenda, partly because it's easier to believe in selfishness than altruism. A group that had been around but hadn't been done much, the Controllers [an offshoot race of Oans, like the Guardians], was suggested. So, what kind of organization would come from this group? The organization might be very similar: even though their motivations aren't the same, they're both trying to eradicate evil—their methods have little to do with each other. Around the DC office, they're being called 'Green Lanterns with attitudes.' "

The Controllers' agenda gradually shows through, Friedman says, but the Darkstars and their administrators also have their own motivations.

"There's layer after layer of agendas being plotted here," Friedman admits. "Being a bureaucracy, that's pretty realistic. The Controllers have their agenda, which is fairly mysterious for now. The organization has the mission of fighting crime on an interplanetary basis but also perpetuating itself throughout space; and the Darkstars themselves have an agenda, which is

probably the most ethical of them all. But, even that is tainted with the realities of law enforcement."

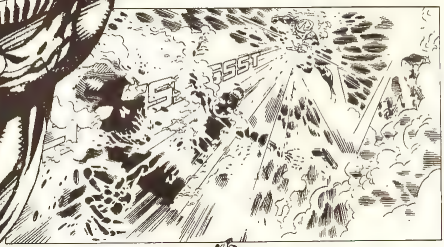
One detail Friedman decided to scrap right away was the concept of a human receiving the Darkstar powers without supervision. "I thought about [Hal Jordan's benefactor] Abin Sur. If he hadn't been under such constraints [dying in the wreck of his spaceship], and had he been pragmatic, he would have resisted the idea of giving his ring to a human. We hadn't even achieved spaceflight then. But an alien coming to Earth on a law enforcement mission probably would be at liberty to recruit some help, which is exactly what our Darkstar does. He would never be allowed to put the powers of a full-fledged Darkstar in the hands of a race like humanity, though. *Never.*"

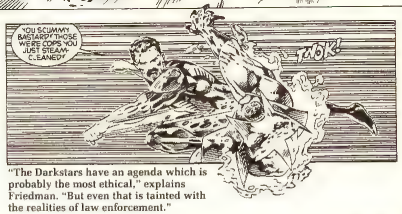
Colos hardly has that problem. His Regional Administrator is Sleer Prigatz, an alien who always wanted to be a Green Lantern but didn't quite measure up.

"He doesn't have the qualifications to be a Lantern, and so, he's very jealous of them," explains Friedman. "It's hard to work with a guy who tries to measure up to a different standard.

"By having Prigatz and the whole organization behind him, we can deal with issues that never crop up in *Green Lantern*, like what happens when the hero beats the bad guy and

Colos may be burned out as a Darkstar, but Mo's world "turns around completely," the writer says.





"The Darkstars have an agenda which is probably the most ethical," explains Friedman. "But even that is tainted with the realities of law enforcement."

Theron Colos "was idealistic and hopeful," explains Friedman. "That's why he became a Darkstar."

has to lock him up. Does he just shove him into a capsule and toss him toward Oa? In the series, we have a couple of guys who show up in issue #4 when Colos beats Evil Star. They don't get along with Colos too well; they just show up and move criminals to penal facilities the Darkstars run. They're around to show that there are other aspects to this whole group, which is called NEMO. They aren't heroes or crimefighters, they're just guys doing a job and earning a paycheck, like real working men do."

Readers will also meet Huvah Jeddigar, the head honcho of NEMO, who reports directly to the Controllers and is anything but a "yes man."

"He's *not* deferential to the Controllers. Jeddigar yells at them, 'I've got work to do—get the hell out of my office!' Can you imagine the old Hal Jordan yelling at the Guardians? Jeddigar's closer to Vril Dox than Hal; he's the guy at the top you can't completely trust because you know he has his own plans going on."

With *Darkstars* thus realized, talk turned to getting an artist. Larry Stroman (CS YEARBOOK #1) came on board for the first three issues, developing the characters' original look and then handing the reins to rising newcomer Travis Charest. Friedman says their art styles are very different, but he has been extremely happy with the work both have done.

Friedman says he gives Charest "the same kinds of direction," as he gave Stroman "but their interpretations are very different. Larry took a liberal view, Travis is more literal. They've got completely different visuals, but they're both great.

"When Larry left, we were thinking of finding someone who could work in his style," notes Friedman, "but then when Travis came along, we saw his art was nothing like Larry's—but his stuff could be great. We wanted him to put his own stamp on this book, and I think he has really done it.

"Travis is a really hot artist, and his stuff gets better with each issue. There's a forcefulness to his art, and a sincerity that grabs you. Much as I liked what Larry was doing, Travis is a different, but very good storyteller—he communicates with me, and Brian Augustyn and Ruben Diaz at DC. He's a real pleasure to work with. I'm not putting anyone down by contrast, but I really like Travis' storytelling abilities."

Charest, for one, is delighted with his first monthly series. "I never thought I would get my own book this fast," he says, having been a professional only since pencilling the 1991 *Hulk Annual*. "I was sure I would be doing fill-in work for a long time—it was a surprise to get this big a break."

His first effort at breaking into

A guest shot by the Golden Age Hawkman and Hawkgirl opens the door for appearances by L.E.G.I.O.N. and Green Lanterns.

"There's some contrast between the cosmic, big-picture aspect of Colos and the ground-level world he works in," notes Friedman.

comics is now three years old, when Charest says he sent pages to both DC and Marvel and got no response. Subsequent mailings led to phone calls from both companies in 1991. His most recent efforts include a story for the new *Showcase '93* book and the summer's *Flash Annual*, which led directly to his getting *Darkstars*.

"The whole thing, from phoning me to *Darkstars*, took about three months," Charest says. "Any time I look at my covers or at the *Flash Annual*, I sit there and go, 'Holy smoke! I've got a book!' At Christmas [1991], I was selling plumbing supplies—now I'm pencilling a book I think will take off."

Meanwhile, the artist's doing a book that he says is about important things. He credits Friedman with presenting strong social messages amid highly entertaining plots.

"What Michael's trying to do with each character is say something about bigger issues," Charest says. "Carla works for gangsters, Colos is burned out, but trying to do the right thing, Mo is a homeless person trying to help people, who sometimes have more than he does—they're all different but trying to do good in the world. There's a real social conscience here; not every page is a fight, not all splash pages. There's more here than just death and car chases."

At the moment, though, Charest speaks of the appearance in *Darkstars* of the Golden Age Hawkman and Hawkwoman, which ends with the alien slavers' arrest and the release of their human prisoners. Issue #7 is a lead-in to a running story involving a villain named Clash, about whom Charest wants to reveal little. However, one of the deputies leaves the group about this time, clearing the way for another to take his place.

"Carla becomes a deputy pretty soon," the artist says. "She gets there just in time for crossovers in issues #10 through #12, when L.E.G.I.O.N. and some Green Lanterns show up."

Colos becomes a beacon of hope for his Earthly deputies, never seeing himself in such a role.

Do we need another superteam?" Friedman muses. "Yes! They fill a niche in the DC Universe. There's a role for them, apart from L.E.G.I.O.N. and the Green Lanterns, and an audience for them: People who like the Green Lantern concept, but whose sensibilities take a more no-nonsense form than those books have. Those other groups show up in *Darkstars* and maybe Darkstars will show up in their books."

Friedman affirms that the other law enforcement groups get first shot at his new team. "The rival organization, the Controllers, are cousins to the Oans, but there'll be jurisdiction disputes in the first year, and of course L.E.G.I.O.N. gets involved with that too," Friedman observes.

As the title progresses, *Darkstars* will also explore serious issues, while not stinting on hard-hitting action.

"There's some contrast between the cosmic, big-picture aspect of Colos and the ground-level world he works in, but not too much or it gets in the way of telling the stories I want to do. It's a direct contrast with other things I've done before," Michael Jan Friedman says. "Unlike *Star Trek*, for instance, the characters don't sit around and think too much. Decisions are made on the run, the way real law enforcement officers make them, and you can only hope you make the right decision."

***The Darkstars*: A far cry from Green Lanterns.**

CARTOON

The architect of Gotham City, Bruce Timm designs & produces the adventures of Batman.

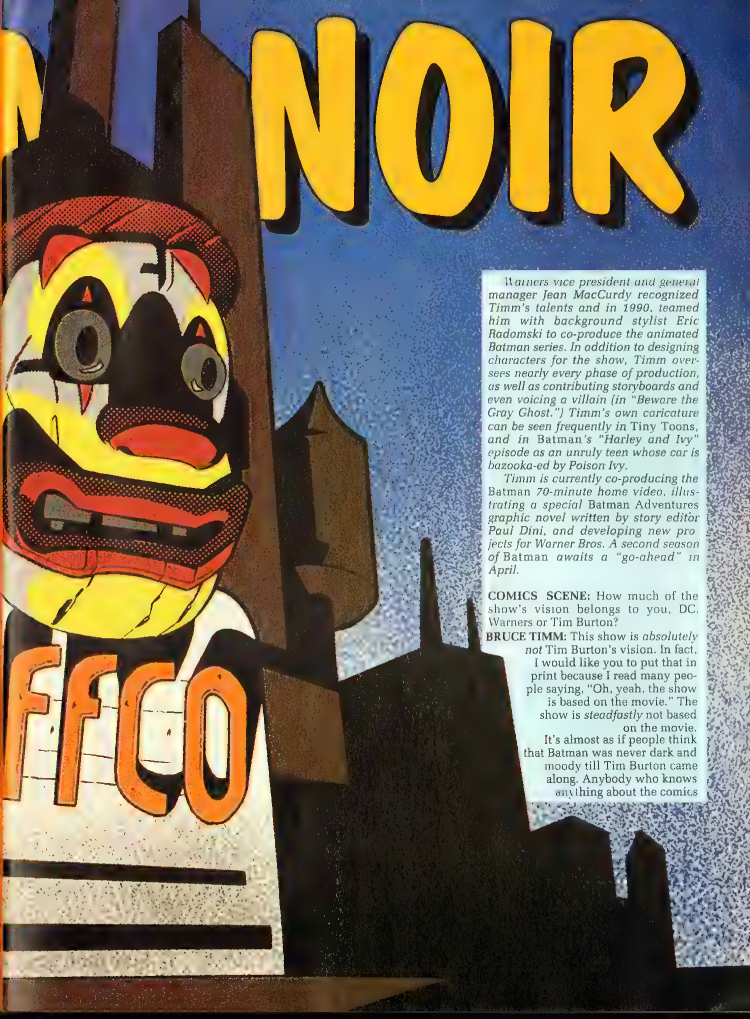
BY BOB MILLER

"Dark Deco" describes the style of Batman: The Animated Series, *evoking a somber, shadowy mood that harks back to Bob Kane's original creation.*

One of Gotham's chief architects is Bruce Timm, who co-produces the series with Eric Radomski and story editor Alan Burnett (CS #29). Together, they supervise four crews of artists, nearly 70 people, who work diligently to animate Batman's adventures.

For more than a decade, Bruce Timm has been part of the animation industry, beginning in 1981 at Filmation as a layout artist on Blackstar, The Lone Ranger, He-Man *and* She-Ra. *He also worked as an assistant animator for Don Bluth on* The Secret of N.I.M.H., Space Ace *and* Dragon's Lair II. *Timm worked for John Kricfalusi on* Mighty Mouse: The New Adventures *in 1987 and* Beany & Cecil *at DIC the following year, designing characters and rendering storyboards.*

Timm joined Warner Bros. in 1989, serving as character designer and storyboard artist on Tiny Toon Adventures *(including "Bat's All, Folks!", the first "Bat Duck" episode and "Hollywood Plucky") for director Art Vitello*



Warners vice president and general manager Jean MacCurdy recognized Timm's talents and in 1990, teamed him with background stylist Eric Radomski to co-produce the animated Batman series. In addition to designing characters for the show, Timm oversees nearly every phase of production, as well as contributing storyboards and even voicing a villain (in "Beware the Gray Ghost.") Timm's own caricature can be seen frequently in Tiny Toons, *and in* Batman's *"Harley and Ivy" episode as an unruly teen whose car is bazooka-ed by Poison Ivy.*

Timm is currently co-producing the Batman *70-minute home video, illustrating a special* Batman Adventures *graphic novel written by story editor Paul Dini, and developing new projects for Warner Bros. A second season of* Batman *awaits a "go-ahead" in April.*

COMICS SCENE: How much of the show's vision belongs to you, DC, Warners or Tim Burton?

BRUCE TIMM: This show is *absolutely not* Tim Burton's vision. In fact, I would like you to put that in print because I read many people saying, "Oh, yeah, the show is based on the movie." The show is *steadfastly* not based on the movie.

It's almost as if people think that Batman was never dark and moody till Tim Burton came along. Anybody who knows anything about the comics

"I wanted to use the old Jack Burnley designs of the Penguin," notes Timm, but the villain had to be changed to fit the movie's version. Inset: Timm's original design idea.

knows that's not true. If anything, our show is *more faithful* to the comics.

But, beyond that, it really is our vision of the show. Warner Bros.' feature division has pretty much left us completely alone. And we have very little contact with DC. Early on, they were getting all the scripts and storyboards—I think they still do—and they were giving us their two-cents' worth. Sometimes we agreed with them and sometimes we didn't. And if we didn't agree with them, we would say, "Well, we'll just do it our way, anyway."

It's mostly Eric Radomski's and my vision of the show, and Alan Burnett's as well. It really is a split three-way collaboration. Of course, the directors and story editors all have their bits and pieces, too.

CS: How did all this get started? Who got the *Batman* project rolling?

TIMM: Somewhere in the middle of 1990, we were finishing up *Tiny Toons* and Jean MacCurdy had this big meeting with the whole *Tiny Toons* crew. People were wondering what was going to be next. She said they were going to start developing new projects, probably a *Batman* series.

I got all excited about *Batman*, went back to my desk and said, "Oh, I don't want to be doing this *Tiny Toons* board; I want to be drawing Batman."

Photos Courtesy Bruce Timm

Explaining the appeal of *Batman*, where violence is just part of the mix, Bruce Timm says, "Our show is really escapist entertainment."

Art: Bruce Timm

"Beware the Gray Ghost" not only had Adam West as the title character, but a Timm-designed poster in homage to George Rozen and the Shadow (with Doc Savage lettering).

So, I whipped out these character designs of Batman and to me, they were what I always wanted to see Batman look like.

The next time Jean had a meeting, I showed my drawings to her and she said, "Oh. Yeah. It's perfect. He's *exactly* what he should look like."

Art: Bruce Timm. All Animated Batman characters & Art: Trademark & Copyright ©1992, 1993 DC Comics Inc.

Nothing really happened for awhile. Then, Jean said, "I would like you and Eric Radomski to put together a *Batman* cartoon, because the Warner Bros. corporate guys aren't really sure if they want to do a series."

We did this little two-minute promo. I designed all the characters, and did the storyboard. Eric did the background styling. That's where we came up with the idea of doing the backgrounds on black paper.

Eric painted all the backgrounds here and then it was shipped to a Canadian studio called Lightbox Animation, whom Eric had dealt with in the past. They put the whole thing together from beginning to end in about a month-and-a-half.

By the time it was done, the series had already sold. [We thought that] we wasted our time, but not really because everybody liked the promo so much that Jean said, "Well, I know you guys never produced a series before, but how would you like to produce a series?" So, Eric and I went, "Well, OK. Sure." [*Chuckles*]

But we did do it with some reservations. We said, "Well, it depends on what you want us to do. If you want to let us do the series this way, like in the promo, and the way we want to do it, then sure, we'll do it. But if you want us to make it a carbon copy of the movie, we don't want to do it."

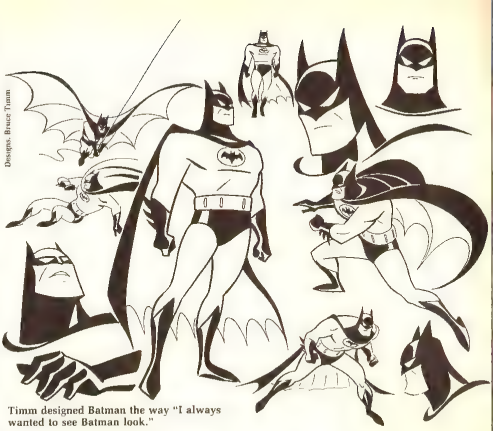
I didn't want the show to be seen as a cheap ripoff of the movie. I like the movie, but to me it *wasn't* Batman. It wasn't what I thought he should be.

One of the amazing things about this whole project, is how little interference we've gotten from the Warner movie studio. We had some grumblings early on. People were a bit concerned that our Batman, our Batmobile and the background styling looked different, it wasn't exactly the same.

After the first movie came out, 20th Century Fox Television started running the old Adam West *Batman* series in syndication to capitalize on the character's popularity, and it was a big ratings success. So, I said, "Kids can understand. They're not confused. They know there's a movie Batman and a TV Batman. They *won't* be confused by having a third cartoon Batman." Fortunately, everybody bought that idea.

There was a little bit of nervousness at one point. We had already shipped four or five shows overseas to be animated, and suddenly, somebody from the lot said, "Oh my God, they have a different Batmobile design than in the movie. This will confuse kids and all the licensees. We've got to have the movie Batmobile in the show."

Fortunately, Tim Burton came to our rescue. Jean had the idea of showing Tim our designs and saying, "Is this close enough to what you're doing in the movie?" He said, "Oh yeah, that's fine. It looks close enough."



Timm designed Batman the way "I always wanted to see Batman look."

Because the characters were so heavily featured in the second film, they did insist that our Catwoman and Penguin look more like the movie's. My initial version of the Penguin looked very much the comic book's '50s Penguin. I wanted to put that design on the screen. And they said, "No, no, no. It's got to be the Danny De Vito one." So, we changed his design a bit to make him more like the movie.

Once the show's look was sold, we went full speed ahead. We just developed the show as we went, which, of course *did* cause some problems.

There were just the usual birthing pangs. Eric and I didn't really see eye-to-eye with our first story editor. Once they hired Alan Burnett as the co-producer/head story writer, things have been much smoother because Alan has a great story sense. We don't always agree on everything. We've had our fights about things like the Batsignal. Eric and I were fighting *against* the Bat-signal as long as we could because we thought it was just plain stupid. But Alan kept insisting. It *is* in the show, but we compromised on it.

CS: What are all your duties?

TIMM: Well, I wear a lot of hats. Early on, I was designing almost all the characters, and I quickly realized I couldn't do that and supervise the storyboards, recordings, scripts and everything all at the same time. So, we quickly hired a bunch of model guys. And we got a really good crew.

But I still end up designing many major characters. It's not that these guys aren't capable. But rather than articulate what exactly's wrong, it's much easier for me to grab a sheet of paper and slap it down over their drawing and redo it.

The directors supervise the boards, and then they bring them in to Eric and me, and we correct them.

Alan [Burnett] supervises the scripts with his story editors and once they deliver a script, Eric and I make notes on it. Sometimes the directors have ideas of what they would like to do differently.

Eric and I usually go to all the recordings. Alan's always there, and Andrea Romano directs the actors. And then we make suggestions, changes, how we would rather hear things right there at the recording. And, I'm almost always at the music and sound FX mix, and sometimes Eric is when he's not too busy. We basically have our fingers in the pie from the very beginning to the end.

What has been great about this show is for a lot of our crew, this is their first job in animation.

CS: You didn't use the *Tiny Toons* crew?

TIMM: No. Very few. We had a couple of guys who came over from *Tiny Toons*, but it's like funny animals and superheroes. Some people can do both; many people can't.

We had a very hard time finding people to work on the show. There have been many people who have done adventure cartoons before, but they have all those bad habits, and because *Batman* has such a unique look to it, we didn't know if they

would be able to do our style.

Towards the end, we had deadlines to meet; we had no crew; so we were getting desperate. We ended up hiring a lot of people who did have experience, but probably half the crew had never worked in animation before, or *anywhere*.

A number of guys could hardly draw when we hired them. Within a couple of weeks, they were going "great guns." When you work around talented people, it forces you to come up to their level. It's like playing tennis. You can't learn to be a good tennis player by playing somebody worse than you. You have to play with somebody *better* than you. And, it's the same thing here. It has been a real delight to see these guys stretch as artists.

Many guys have worked on adventure cartoons where they were never allowed to have any action, because [they're told], "Oh, no, it's unacceptable," [and as a result] have done mediocre work. But here, they get to pull out all the stops. They think, "Oh, God, I've always wanted to do this and now I'm going to *do* it."

There was this one show ["Heart of Steel"] where robots are taking over Gotham City. The second part of the episode is Batman fighting these robots, and because they're robots, we can beat the crap out of them. So, every time the storyboard artists got a sequence with Batman versus one of these robots, they went *crazy*. And the board came out twice as long as it should have been. We had to cut all that stuff out. Each segment turned into its own episode.

CS: Tell us about the show's style.

TIMM: Basically, we're trying to do *Citizen Kane*. One of the whole reasons why Eric and I wanted to do *Batman* was we wanted to do the first *really good* adventure cartoon for TV. 'Cause there has never really been one. *Jonny Quest* was good for its time, but when you look at it now it's pretty crude.

CS: Why don't we see more quality adventure cartoons?

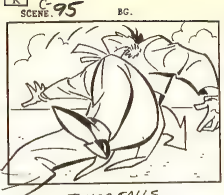
TIMM: I don't know. I always thought, what's the big deal? Why are adventure shows so bad in animation? What's the missing ingredient? Whatever it is that we're doing right, I honestly don't know what that is. I have some theories, but—

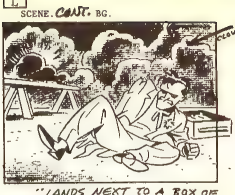
CS: Such as?

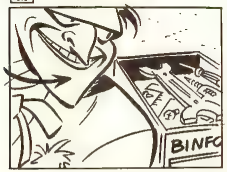
TIMM: Well, one thing is timing. And before you can even get to the timing—but it's directly related—is the length of the scripts. Most animation scripts are *twice* as long as they should be. They jam so much story in there that you don't have time to let anything play out. Especially mood scenes.

We had serious problems with that at first. We were getting all these really long scripts, really dialogue-heavy. Dialogue eats up an incredible amount of time, and we were trying to tell as much of the story visually as possible. So, we would yank whole chunks of dialogue out. This was a big fight between us and the story editors early on, because they couldn't understand.

There's a solid rule for live action,







where a script page equals a minute of screen time. And that's *never* applied to animation. And I don't know why. It should apply to animation. If you have a 22-minute show, you should have a 22-page script. Even now, we still don't get scripts that short.

CS: In many ways, *Batman* seems like a live-action show.

TIMM: Our whole thinking on this series has been live-action storytelling. A *big* part of what makes *Batman* work better as an adventure series is the simplicity of the design. In every adventure series I've ever worked on, they load the characters up with so much *detail*. Many guys who produce adventure series are first of all, stoned comic book fans, and Japanese animation fans. They have this attitude that, "Well, the only reason why our shows look so bad when they come back is all those damn animators overseas are just too lazy to draw in all those muscles."

Well, that's not true. When you have all those muscles on a character, it looks bad when it starts moving around. I like the simplicity of design. All you have to do is look at *any* Disney film. That's the most expensive studio in the world with the best animation in the world and all of their characters look very, very simple. They know that the more detail you have on a character, the harder it is for that character to move.

So, I think that anybody who's in charge of art directing a series really should do some assistant animation for awhile. I did that at Bluth. Every single line that's on a character has to be drawn thousands and thousands and thousands of times. So, it just makes sense to simplify the design.

Beyond simplification, the character design has to be pushed. It has to be cartooned, because cartoons *aren't* "moving comic books."

CS: How is Batman's approach to cartoon voice acting different?

TIMM: When I first started talking about the series, I was picking the brains of the other directors on *Tiny Toons*. For *Batman*, I wanted to have all of the voices sound like real people. I've always hated the way characters sounded in adventure cartoons—either really flat or too cartoony.

One director said, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, at Marvel when we did *Spider-Man*, we tried to do naturalistic voices, and it doesn't work. It just sounds boring."

And I went, "Oh, really?" I was actually freaked out by that. I thought, "Well, maybe he's right. Because I had never heard naturalistic line readings in a cartoon before. Maybe it won't translate to animation."

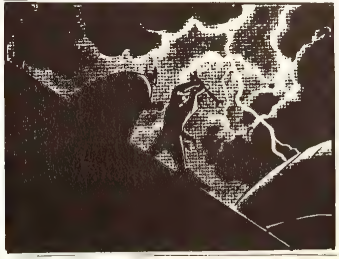
But what the hell, we tried it, and I think it works. When you listen to the series, it doesn't sound like a cartoon. It sounds very much like a live-action show. That includes the sound FX. They do a total Foley job [sound FX addition process] on every show, so every single footstep, cape rustle and everything is there.

CS: Wasn't it risky using celebrities for voices, as opposed to people who make their living projecting character through their voice?

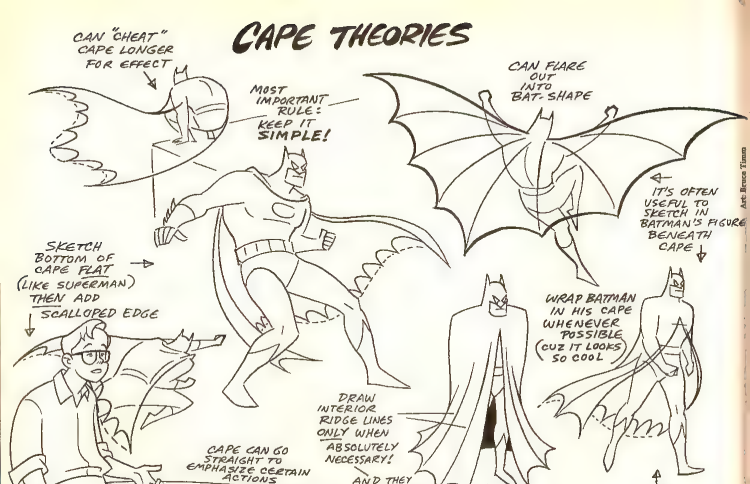
TIMM: Well, that's what celebrities do. Celebrities are actors as well.

It has happened in almost every show we record: Any time we've had somebody new, when they sit down and we rehearse and they start reading the lines, they immediately start doing cartoon voices. And we say, "Stop it."

Initially, I told Andrea [Romano, voice director], "I don't want to hear



"Laughing Fish" Short Awards: By & Courtesy Bruce Timm


CAPE THEORIES
CAN "CHEAT" CAPE LONGER FOR EFFECT
MOST IMPORTANT RULE: KEEP IT SIMPLE!
CAN FLARE OUT INTO BAT-SHAPE
IT'S OFTEN USEFUL TO SKETCH IN BATMAN'S FIGURE BENEATH CAPE
Art: Bruce Timm
SKETCH BOTTOM OF CAPE FLAT (LIKE SUPERMAN) THEN ADD SCALLOPED EDGE
WRAP BATMAN IN HIS CAPE WHENEVER POSSIBLE (CUZ IT LOOKS SO COOL
DRAW INTERIOR RIDGE LINES ONLY WHEN ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY!
AND THEY SHOULD ALWAYS TAPER INTO A "DESIGN"
CAPE CAN GO STRAIGHT TO EMPHASIZE CERTAIN ACTIONS
"CAN "CHEAT" CAPE LONGER WHEN NECESSARY (LIKE WHEN HE'S JUST STANDING THERE)
SHORTER WHEN WALKING
AVOID PARALLEL LINES!
(EXCEPT WHEN NECESSARY)

"The character design has to be pushed," states Timm. "Cartoons aren't 'moving comic books.' "

The Mad Bomber from the "Gray Ghost" episode "is supposed to look like me," says Timm. "I did his voice."

typical cartoon voices. I don't want Maurice LeMarche and Frank Welker on this show because I've heard their voices so many times." But we did eventually end up using both those guys, and both were real good. *But*, we did have to tell them both, "No, no, no, no, stop doing those cartoon voices. Do some real acting." And they did.

CS: Was the staging in the storyboards influenced by the Japanese?

TIMM: I'll tell you something. I'm *not* a big Japanese animation fan. I've seen a lot of Japanese animation, and I *don't* like it. There's a little bit too much of it. It overwhelms me, so I'm not as big a fan as some other guys here are. But most of my directors are real big Japanese animation fans.

Kevin Altieri, for example, is a huge Miyazaki fan. And so he throws every Miyazaki trick in the book into the series. Sometimes it works; sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes I'm in the editing room hitting him, "Don't *do* that effect, *ever again*."

We pick and choose stylistic stuff from different sources. There's also movie staging. Many times when we're doing a board with a director, I'll say, "Oh, remember that scene in *Touch of Evil*? Why don't we do this scene like that scene?" And he knows what I'm talking about.

Many people notice the [Max & Dave] Fleischer influence, too. But it's not like we sat down and studied all the *Superman* cartoons and said, "Oh, let's do this." We've all seen those cartoons so many times we naturally pull that stuff out of our subconscious.

One stylistic thing that we do in the series I got directly from a Fleischer Superman cartoon—and that's the simplicity of the background design.

You look at those Fleischer Superman cartoons and they look so complex and so rich, but there are *so many cheats* in there. Many times you'll have a room, and there's an overhead shot of Clark Kent talking to Perry White. There's the desk, and then the whole background is just a spotlight. There's just *no room* in there at all. They totally faked it. And so we could do things like that all the time, because you're not going to notice it anyway. The background's not there. You just have a graduated shadow that looks like a background. When you're watching the show, you're not sitting there admiring the background. Your eye is actually following the characters. The backgrounds fortunately look great, but they're really very simple.

CS: Why can *Batman* take risks other adventure cartoons haven't?

TIMM: That's because of the character. We had meetings early on over at Fox with [Fox TV exec] Margaret Loesch. We told her straight up front: "This is *Batman*. Now everybody knows Batman from the movie rather than the TV series. So, everybody's idea of Batman

is much more sophisticated than it would have been, say, five years ago. Our audience expects a certain amount of dark, gritty, realistic." And Margaret said, "Well, of course. That's why we want to do this, because of the movie."

Thank God. I may not have agreed with that first film, but at least it changed people's attitudes about what Batman was. So, we were able to push the outside of the envelope a little bit further than probably any other show has been allowed to do or will be allowed to do. Even then, it has been a struggle dealing with the broadcast standards and practices.

We go totally full-out every episode. We'll say, "Yeah, let's make it as action-filled as possible, and we'll let them tone us down," because they will.

CS: Keeping the pressure groups in mind, how do you deal with the show's violence?

TIMM: The show only looks violent compared to other *cartoons*. It doesn't look violent compared to any live-action show. *Any* episode of *Magnum, P.I.* is three times as violent as any *Batman* episode. Magnum can hit 10 guys in the face in an episode. We can't do it *once*. Which is why you see a lot of kicking, because theoretically, kicking is less imitable than direct blows to the head.

There's a lot of implied violence. Stuff takes place off-screen. Things are done in silhouette, with shadows, or with cutting. So, the *feel* of the show is actually more violent than it is.

Again, if *Batman* was nothing but wall-to-wall violence, and if that was the *only* thing going on, that would be a different story. Fortunately, I think the scripts *are* real strong and dramatic. They're actually telling stories. It's not just, Batman fights the villain today, and then they get into a big fight and then it's over. There actually are plots and character development within the series.

The action is there just as spice in the mix. There's not only violence. There's humor, dramatics, mood and mystery. Action is just one of the elements of the series; *not* the whole reason for the series.

CS: Is Warners planning an animated feature?

TIMM: There's discussion of that at the moment. Warner Bros. Animation is strongly thinking about going into feature animation. I've talked to Jean about that, about possibly doing a feature-length adventure cartoon. I would love to do it. There's a totally untapped market out there for adult adventure cartoons.

CS: Are there any other superhero shows from Warners in the works?

TIMM: Maybe. The guys and I went down the entire DC roster, but really, anything we do will be anticlimactic after *Batman*, because Batman is the ultimate icon superhero. There's so much that's cool about Batman that doesn't apply to *any* other comic character. We thought about all the other DC characters, but it's, "Well, yeah, do we want to do 65 half-hours of *Hawkman*? You like him but do you really want to do *65*?"

Another problem is selling it to the corporation. We have to convince them that it's a commercially-viable project: "Do you want to do 65 episodes of *The Creeper*?" And they're going to say, "Well, *what's The Creeper*?"

CS: What about Green Lantern?

TIMM: You could maybe do 10 cool *Green Lantern* shows. But when you get to episode 10, it's like, well, what else is he going to pull out of that ring? Geez, those giant scissors aren't going to work any more.

CS: Wonder Woman?

TIMM: No way! The comics don't know what to do with Wonder Woman. She's *not* an interesting character. And women characters are particularly sensitive. Little girls will watch. But we don't know if little boys will watch.

Blackhawks, maybe. But *only* if they would let us do it the right way, set it back in the '40s during World War II. That might be kind of fun. Even again, 65 of them? That's an awful lot.

There are really very few characters who can sustain that kind of interest. The reason *Batman* is so good is because he's an icon; he's a symbol.

CS: What's the show's future?

TIMM: It depends on whether Fox wants another season. We *are* going to be doing a 70-minute direct-to-home video episode. Then, there's the possibility of doing 30 more episodes.

I'm of two minds about that. On one hand, it would be nice. On the other, I'm kind of tired of *Batman*. I love Batman and everything, but man, we've done 65 of these suckers. I'm just burnt. I would like to move on and do something else. We'll see.

Art: Bruce Timm

All Art Courtesy Bruce Timm

Certain actions aren't allowed in cartoons, but that doesn't mean the guys behind the scenes can forget them. Some of them are illustrated here by Bruce Timm. How many can you name?

WHERE DINOSAURS ROAM

On vacation from the Turtles, Jim Lawson sends his top aviatrix to discover Dino Island.

By PETER ORR

You can go either of two ways with a dinosaur comic. You can stay within the bounds of existing paleontology, and cast only a roster faithful to whichever period you pick, and have no dialogue but for the occasional *aaaaarrrooooo*. Or you can whip up every critter that catches your fancy and pit 'em against humans, airplanes and space aliens.

Here's a hint: Triassic purists should stay off *Dino Island*.

"I'm pretty loose with the technical stuff," says Jim Lawson, creator of the two-issue series from Mirage (whose title he wants you to pronounce "dieno," not like the Flintstones' hyperactive dogasaurus). "It's just always a neat premise when you mix up time periods and find a land where dinosaurs still exist. It came off the top of my head. Basically, I thought it would be a fun thing to do. I'm a big dinosaur nut, so I came up with ways to work in everything I like to draw, to incorporate all my favorite things. I always thought it would be cool to have a dogfight between an airplane and a flying saucer, for instance."

Given that the plot of *Dino Island* exists solely to unite disparate subjects Lawson feels like drawing, the script deserves credit just for making sense. Better still, Lawson breaks other barriers, particularly the engraved-in-granite decree that the lead in a traditional boys' adventure tale must be male.

"This character named Amelia is a female aviator, and she's attempting a trans-oceanic speed record. It takes place kind of in the Bermuda Triangle, which I have a fascination with," explains the cheerfully obsessed Lawson. "She goes through a dimensional doorway or something, and ends up on this island where she finds dinosaurs and other people who have stumbled in through the same doorway. Beyond that, um...I offer a theory as to why they're there."

Oh, yeah? And what theory might that be? Lawson hems for a minute before revealing, as though this explains all, "Well, there are *aliens* involved."

Keep reading. We'll squeeze it out of him later.

The images from Lawson's interdimensional paradise stand out, and not just for being drawn well. Amelia looks peculiar wearing flight fatigues. This is the first woman we've seen ride a triceratops without

even showing her cleavage. "As a matter of fact, I originally wrote it with a male lead. I don't know why I changed it," Lawson explains. "You don't see a woman in comics unless she's a scantily-clad superheroine flying through the air or something. There just aren't any *normal* female leading characters. I like to think I do different things, so it appeals to me to put a woman there. It clicked when I made that change. I guess it sounds cliché, but the story came alive."

Fully clothed women aside, Lawson's prehistory still owes more to *Land of the Lost* than to Edgar Rice Burroughs. "I'm not real well-read on dinosaurs or classic fantasy," Lawson points out. "For example, I've seen a few of the movies based on Burroughs' work, but who hasn't? I fell in love with dinosaurs in the movies, on TV."

Nor has Lawson followed earlier dinosaur efforts in the comics realm, like DC's *War That Time Forgot*, which shared *Dino Island*'s World War II-era setting. "That was just the time period I wanted to deal with," Lawson says. "I've set the story in 1942, and the reason I did that is that I really like WW II aircraft. I wanted to work that in, just a battleship and a couple of different planes. I'm crazy about planes, and I love having *any* excuse to draw them."

While his fascination with flying machines in particular might stem from his grandfather's tour of pilot duty in World War I ("He used to fly one of those Curtiss Jennies, the trainer planes," Lawson beams, and you can just picture him at his drawing table, pretending to strafe the Red Baron), the technological bent of Lawson's style is striking. His art reflects his strongest influences, which, except for Moebius, all seem to possess a mechanical element.

"I'm a real kook about vehicles," Lawson confesses. "I always mention Steve Austin and a guy by the name of Dave 'Big' Deal, who were my influences while growing up. Steve Austin was my favorite artist from *CARtoons*, and Dave Deal draws spot illustrations for automotive journals. I just loved his work, which I used to see all the time because I read those magazines.

"I wasn't much of a comics fan growing up," he goes on. "I bought books when I was much younger. A few come to mind. I was a big Ross Andru fan when he was drawing *Spider-Man*, and I would buy all those. And I liked *Swamp Thing* a lot when Nestor Redondo was doing the art, and I bought *Werewolf by Night*. I really *wasn't* into comics, and I stopped buying them altogether and was interested more in the illustration field. I went to Paier College of Art in Connecticut and majored in illustration."

All Dino Island Art: Jim Lawson

"I'm pretty loose with the technical stuff," says creator Jim Lawson. His dinosaurs aren't anatomically correct. "I'd be shocked if they were."

Lawson never had an epiphany that led him to choose the comics field. Apparently, comics chose him. He graduated and went through the standard series of insane and tedious jobs, while filling his portfolio with the carefully inked spot illos he imagined would eventually land him a gig with *Road & Track*.

"At one point, I was laying out ads for the local newspaper, and summers I worked as a shuttle driver. If you took a canoe trip, I was the guy who would drive the vanload of canoes down to the river and drop everybody off," he laughs. "A friend who used to be my high school French teacher knew Peter Laird's wife, and said Peter was having some success with a comic book, and would I like to meet him? I packed up my portfolio and met Kevin Eastman and Pete. They really cracked me up. I got along with them instantly, and they checked out my portfolio full of spot illustrations in ink.

"Well, my timing was good, because shortly thereafter they called me to say a guy named Tony Basillicato had approached Kevin and Pete with a comic he wanted to do called *Prime Slime Tales*. It's a pretty obscure title now. But he needed an inker, so they called me to ask if I wanted to try inking. I did, and since then, I've been working with Mirage. That was in 1985."

So it was that Lawson began accumulating a list of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* credits longer than your arm. He has at various times pencilled the black-and-white comic, and will continue to do so until issue #62, where the "City at War" story cycle concludes. He also pencilled Mirage's adaptation of the ubiquitous reptiles' big-screen debut and all seven issues of *Tales of the TMNT*. He handled all art duties on Tundra's *Secret of the Ooze* adaptation. He even took a turn scripting Michaelangelo's version of "A Christmas Carol."

All Dino Island Art & Photos Courtesy Mirage Studios

Originally sporting a male lead, *Dino Island* became the story of a more realistic heroine, Amelia, and her dinosaurs.

And still he's not sick of them! Part of the reason is that, having spent so much time with the Turtles, he has *TMNT* creators Laird and Eastman's confidence in experimenting with the creatures. "I know how Kevin and Pete want the Turtles treated," he says. "So within that, yes, I am restricted. But knowing the limitations so well gives me the chance to do almost anything within them. My position offers me an incredible amount of creative freedom."

Lawson's creative freedom isn't just among shelled martial-arts buffs, either. Mirage published four issues of *Bade Biker*, a series created and illustrated by Lawson. "Bade was a character I wanted to try on my own. Not surprisingly, I'm something of a motorcycle nut, and again I wanted to do something different. You see lots of superheroes, but I wanted to do something about a regular guy, who has extraordinary experiences. I wanted it to be funny and kind of fantastic. I came up with this biker fellow Bade, who hangs out with this mutated frog named Orson. They just ride around and have adventures."

Another Lawson character carries on some of Bade's tradition. Watch for Guzzi LeMans—named for Italian motorcycle manufacturer Moto Guzzi's LeMans model—in the Mirage anthology *Plastron Cafe*. "I would say she is like Bade, but a little more gritty," Lawson says. "With Guzzi, it's the same with Amelia: She's a female lead character, who dresses in regular clothes and doesn't show anything off."

The chance to explore projects like these while working on *TMNT* is an opportunity few writer/artists receive, a sad fact not lost on Lawson. "I hate to say it, but a lot of it is luck. And, being in the right place at the right time," he notes. "I don't mean to say hard work isn't part of it, or that I have a career someone should envy. It just seems that there are many people who I consider better artists than I am, and they can't find work. It's funny, life is like that."

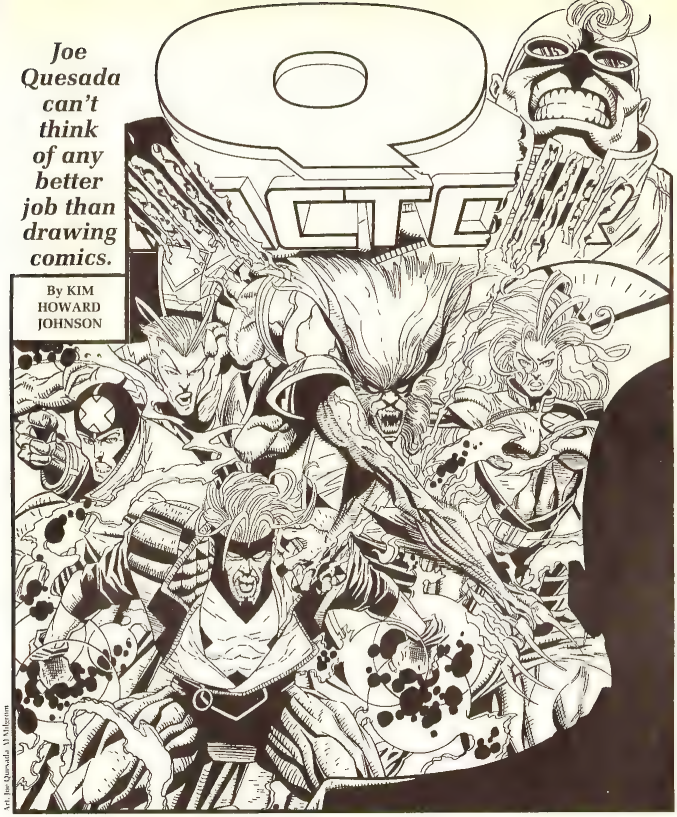
Considering that his prized creative liberty stems from the exploits of four bizarre yet very profitable sewer denizens, we might count on Lawson for some profound insight into the nature of their popularity. He agrees, and wishes he had such input to offer.

"Yesterday I did an interview for this infomercial on Mirage, and the lady asked me that same thing. And I really couldn't offer a reply," Lawson marvels. "I mean, other than its quality as an entertaining comic. I think much of it is really good marketing, of course, and also there's the timing—

(continued on page 66)

Joe Quesada can't think of any better job than drawing comics.

By KIM HOWARD JOHNSON



Art: Joe Quesada, Al Milgrom

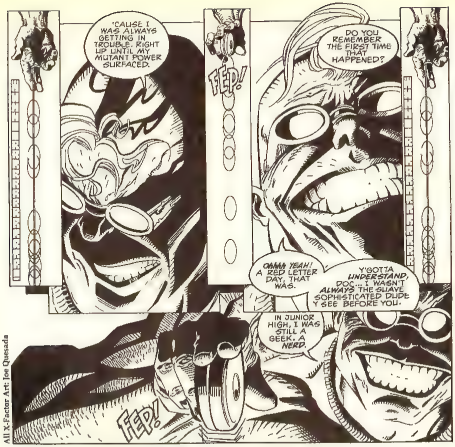
Joe Quesada has re-invented the Ray, and helped to create Azrael. Now, the red-hot artist is aiming his pencil at a team of Marvel mutants—and he couldn't be happier.

Quesada is taking on *X-Factor*, as they go back to Genosha and the series builds to the *X-Men's* 30th anniversary. Along with writer Peter (*Incredible Hulk*) David, he promises new characters and new costumes, with plenty of old-fashioned excitement.

"One of the new characters will probably become a team member. Only Peter and I know his origin—even the people at Marvel don't know who he is," says Quesada. "The character is called Galahad, and he mysteriously appears during the Genosha storyline. I can't say much more about him, though. We'll discover several things about the team, including some major problems with Rahne. She discovers a lot about herself and her past."

Quesada says X-Factor ends up in the Genóshan intrigue due to the X-Patriots. "They stop the X-Patriots, and the X-Patriots finally decide that Genosha is where they belong. Val Cooper convinces Quicksilver to go back with the X-Patriots to Genosha, much to Quicksilver's chagrin, but once he gets there, he grows to like it."

The Genosha storyline then leads into a special event that encompasses all of the mutant titles, *X-Factor* #92,


"CAUSE I WAS ALWAYS GETTING IN TROUBLE RIGHT BEFORE MY MUTANT POWER SURFACED!
DO YOU REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME THAT HAPPENED?
FEP!
OHHH YEAH! A RED LETTER DAY, THAT WAS.
Y'GOTTA UNDERSTAND, I WASN'T ALWAYS THE SLAVE SOPHISTICATED DUDE Y'SEE BEFORE YOU.
IN JUNIOR HIGH, I WAS STILL A GEEK, A NERD.
FEP!
FEP!

All X-Factor Art: Joe Quesada

"Without a doubt, Guido is the best to draw," says artist Joe Quesada.

along with the rest of that month's X-books, will include a hologram cover to celebrate the X-Men's 30th anniversary. Big surprises are in store, but Quesada is close-mouthed about them.

"It's going to be great," he says. "The storyline is going to involve a massive crossover. Much of it is predictable, but other things are going to be mind-blowing! There will be some changes, as always. It's going to be an X-Men battle royale, and great fun!"

Quesada's kickoff issue, *X-Factor* #87, was something completely different from most superhero comics—a story that featured the entire team during a group therapy session. The artist notes that the tale was a perfect way to acquaint himself with the characters.

"In *X-Men* terms, *nothing* happens in that issue; they're just sitting around talking for 23 pages. That issue forced me to get to know the characters instantaneously. By the time that story was over," he says, "I pretty much knew how I was going to approach each one of these characters artistically, and how I was going to make them act."

The artist found his own attitudes toward the team shifting during the course of his first issue. "It's really funny. When I went into this, Peter was asking me what I thought of the characters, and for my own personal reasons, I had this incredible hatred of Multiple Man. He just didn't do it for me. Multiple Man has one of the shortest segments in that issue, but by the time I finished drawing him, I thought he was really cool! Now, I'm into Multiple Man, and we're going to do some fun things with him."

He tries not to play favorites, but Quesada admits that Guido, "the Strong Guy," is the member he most enjoys drawing. "Without a doubt, Guido is the best to draw. I can get way out there with him," he says. "In the group therapy story, we revealed that Guido is in constant, total pain, and he has a jovial attitude to cover up the fact that he's hurting. He needs the team: he's not there for just the money or the fun, he enjoys having friends in his teammates."

Another consequence of Quesada's arrival on *X-Factor* is a new look for each of the team members. "Before you know it, the team will be out of that blue-and-gold-uniformed look," he says. "Everybody's going to be expressing themselves more openly through different costumes. Lorna already revealed her costume in group therapy. The only one who might remain the same is Havok, because he looks so damned cool!

"When I took on the book, I debated with Bob [Harras, the editor], I wanted to do something different with the title and make it look exciting. Peter is such a strong writer, he could work it into continuity. Bob said go for it, so we're changing the look. Even Quicksilver is going to have a team outfit somewhere down the line."

Quesada says his collaboration with Peter David is very close. "Peter's ready to kill me!" he laughs. "I call him at least once a day just to annoy him with little details. As I read the plots, I've found that Peter's voice is non-existent. Each character speaks with a completely and totally distinct and different voice. I don't see the writer's hand in it, and it's wonderful to work with him.

"He has taught me what really good writing can do. He's so specific as to what he wants, yet I have so much room to do things within those parameters, that it's really surprising. I'm very surprised at how quickly I can move on these pages, simply because I can express my own feelings about the characters through Peter's parameters. There's a lot of leeway."

Selected Art: Courtesy Joe Quesada/23rd Century Artworks & Marvel Comics

Quesada's *X-Factor* baptism, the group therapy issue #87, "forced me to get to know the characters instantaneously."

All X-Factor Characters & Art: Trademark & Copyright 1992 Marvel Entertainment Group

Art: Joe Quesada/Jim Rubinstein

Surprises in store for *X-Factor* are kept secret by the artist, but upcoming issues will have "an X-Men battle royale, and great fun."

Like most artists, Quesada has fallen victim to deadline crunches, which he attributes in part to the acclaim which met his work on *The Ray* mini-series (CS #24). Still, he does all he can to avoid situations where that might occur.

"If you're working on a book that's not interesting, sure, it's going to be tough to meet that deadline and be even remotely interested over a long period of time," he explains. "I had a few problems making deadlines myself, but it was never for lack of trying—I was working seven days a week for the last two years, and since *The Ray*, I fell into a situation where everybody in the world offered me something to do, and I was saying, 'Oh, that's so cool, I can't say no.' But that, like everything else, is a learning process in this business. If you don't learn that rule right away, you're in trouble!

"The nice thing about doing *X-Factor* is that I don't have to work on a book I'm dissatisfied with. When Bob offered me an X-book, *X-Factor* was the first thing out of my mouth," Quesada says. "I thought it would be such a gas to work with Peter, and that particular book was available, so I jumped at the chance! I've never been a big *X-Men* fan—in fact, I'm very new to comics. If you haven't been reading comics that long, the *X-Men* books are very tough to jump into the middle of and try to pick up. I tried several times, but it was too confusing. The nice thing about the group therapy issue is that anybody who hasn't been reading *X-Factor* will find that it's almost a first issue. It's a *great* starting point for people who want to jump on the book."

Quesada also points out that *X-Factor* has its own voice in a way that the other X-titles—*X-Men*, *X-Force* and *Uncanny X-Men*—do not, operating somewhat more independently of those titles.

"It's kind of the odd man out at this point," he says. "I can't complain. It's a great-selling book, but by *X-Men* standards, it's sort of the black sheep of the family. They're in the fold, but they're not. We'll see how the book picks up!"

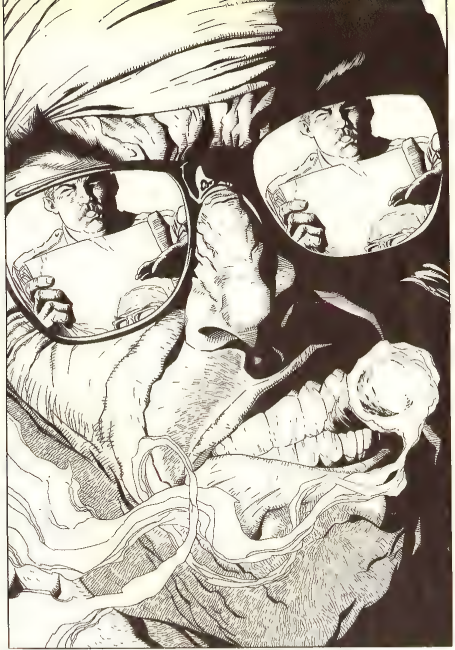
The artist says his desire to experiment with a variety of genres led him to do a short story for Marvel, one which he only agreed to do under a rather unusual condition.

"I've done superhero and detective stuff, but next for me is a nine-page segment in *Midnight Sons Unlimited* #1. I asked for it because I always wanted to do a really nice horror comic. They offered me a story, and I said, 'Yeah, but you have to print it in black-and-white.' That's going to be a lot of fun, a nine-page black-and-white segment in a color Marvel comic. I would like to try everything eventually—nothing specific, just as long as they're good stories."

Assessing his own abilities, Quesada feels that his story pacing is his greatest strength as a comics artist. "I really work hard on that," he explains. "My weakness is my drawing. Every day I try to learn to draw a little bit better, but I'm nowhere near the artist that guys like Jim Lee are—it's something to aspire toward. That's what's so wonderful working with Kevin Nowlan. During the four issues of *Batman: Sword of Azrael*, I would get back my originals and learn something new with every page. Kevin is just a genius."

Quesada pencilled the *Batman: Sword of Azrael* mini-series, which introduced the character. Knowing that Azrael would become a major player in the Batman continuity added to the pressures.

"I foreshadowed certain events, certain things in panels that the readers probably won't pick up unless they



Though deadline crunches hinder him, Quesada can't beat his job. "It's always exciting for me to get to the next page."

look back on those issues in a few months," he says. "*Azrael* was an interesting project. Denny O'Neil writes a full script, with captions and everything put down panel by panel. That in itself is a challenge, because Denny has his idea of how the pacing should work, and obviously, all the other parties involved have their own ideas of how the pacing should work—it was a hell of a great experience."

With a relatively new career in comics, Quesada says the limited series was invaluable in advancing his knowledge of the medium.

"I learned more from *Azrael* than probably everything I've ever done. I was working with the best guys in the business! I had Denny O'Neil writing it, Kevin Nowlan inking, and Lovern Kindzierski coloring. The artists never see the coloring until the book is out, but when I would get those books from the comic shop, I was blown away! I felt like I was looking at somebody else's book, because the coloring was so magnificent. There were sequences where Lovern would call me up and want to know what time of day it was, and about lighting effects—then, when I got the books, they actually progressed day to night, night to day, through all four issues! It was really a fulfilling learning experience to work with pros like that. I felt like the waterboy in the middle of all this, warming the bench," he laughs.

Hinting at an ever-increasing role of Azrael in the Batman titles, Quesada says he felt a great deal of responsibility to do the series justice.

"That's what made it tough around the deadline crunch. *Azrael* #3 missed shipping, and that really killed me," he confesses. "But, I had no one to blame but myself because of my overcommitments. I really got down on myself for that, and believe me, the pressure was on, because Azrael is so important to continuity at this point."

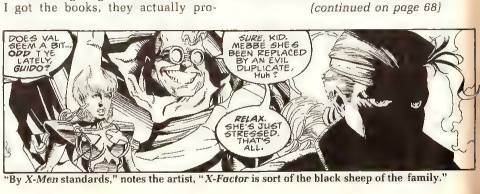
Among Quesada's other commitments are the cover art and layouts on DC's *Crucible* limited series, which revives the Black Hood, the Comet and the Shield. Despite his workload, Quesada wanted to be involved in the book as much as possible.

"DC wanted to revive the Impact line, and they wanted to do something really great with it," he says. "I personally call it 'Crisis on the Impact Universe.' They're tying up loose ends, bringing the whole thing full circle. DC wants to say, 'Hey, these are good characters.' The market perception wasn't quite what they had hoped, and they want to show people that something *really good* can be done with those characters. They called me up and asked me to pencil, but because of the over-commitment thing, I agreed to do breakdowns and covers for the books instead."

Joe Quesada became known to most comics fans through his work on the first *Ray* mini-series, and he admits he still has a soft spot in his heart for the series and the attitude it inspired in its creators.

"*The Ray* was that one project that I'll never have again," he says. "I didn't know what I was doing. We were all just winging it, and we figured, 'If this bird flies, it flies.' And it did! Because everyone approached it with a sort of 'nothing to lose' attitude and naiveté and freshness, the character actually came across that way. I look back on it and think, 'I really wish

(continued on page 68)


DOES VAL SEEM A BIT... ODD TO YOU LATELY, GUIDO?
SURE, KID. HE'S BEEN REPLACED BY AN EVIL DUPLICATE. HUH?
RELAX. SHE'S JUST STRESSED. THAT'S ALL.

"By *X-Men* standards," notes the artist, "*X-Factor* is sort of the black sheep of the family."

LEGIONNAIRES

They're the perfect team for everyone who never liked the "Legion of Super Heroes."

By JOE NAZZARO

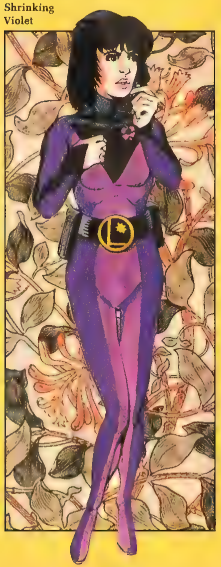
There's good news for fans of the original *Legion of Super Heroes*: The old team is back—sort of. DC Comics has launched *Legionnaires*, a new title that brings back the original characters, with different names, different costumes, as well as a few exciting twists and turns.

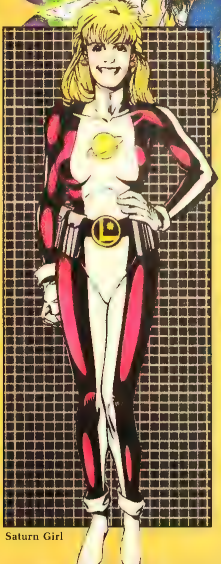
Confused? Well, basically the old/new group was reintroduced in the pages of *Legion of Super Heroes*, courtesy of writers Keith Giffen and Tom & Mary Bierbaum, who will be helming *Legionnaires*. While the full storyline is far too complex to be recounted in detail, Tom Bierbaum offers a quick explanation for new readers. "The central idea," he explains, "is that they're a bunch of kids, who've been around on Earth helping out during the war with the Dominators. We'll probably never get all that deeply into those events in *Legionnaires*, because it's a complicated story that wouldn't be that interesting to people who weren't reading it the first time.

"The actual background is that they woke up and crawled out of pods during the war, and they're either the Legionnaires, who formed the Legion 20 years earlier, or they're clones pro-

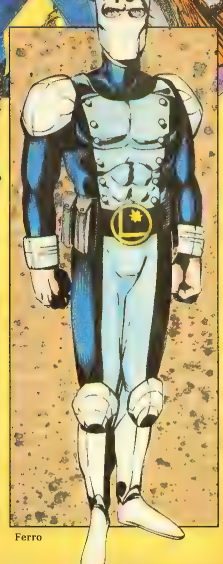
Returning to battle the heroes is a familiar team: The Fatal Five. Included are (left to right): a new Emerald Empress, Tharok, Persuader, Mano and introducing Mordecai (rear).

Shrinking Violet





Saturn Girl



Ferro

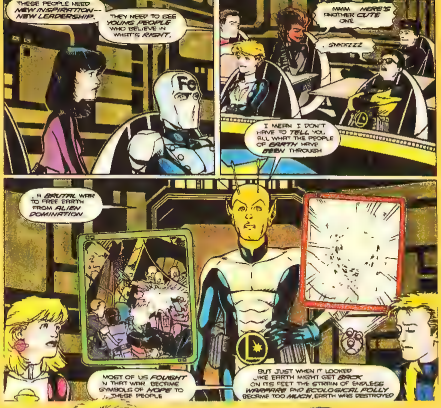
All Legionnaires Art: Chris Sprouse•Karl Story All Legionnaires Art Colors: Tom McCraw

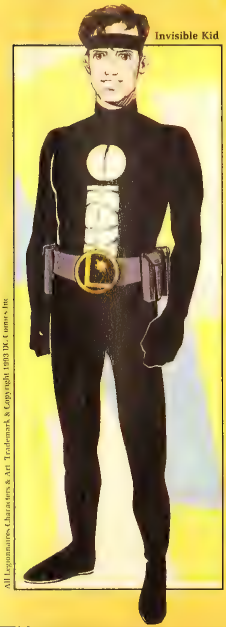
Chameleon, looking for some new excitement, is the adult advisor to the *Legionnaires*.

duced during the war. These are kids who have been brought together at wartime to form this group, because they have super powers. That's the origin as far as readers of our book will be concerned."

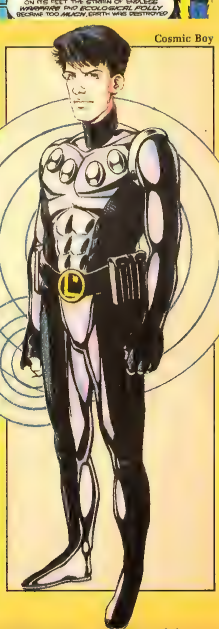
According to Bierbaum, the new title will stand on its own, allowing readers who haven't followed the regular *Legion* book to dive right in, starting with issue #1. "The key points, though, are that the Earth of this era has actually been destroyed, and what you have left are floating cities linked together in space.

"Among the themes we'll be exploring are that things have been tough for the people of Earth, but these kids and the rest of society are trying to put it back together again," Tom Bierbaum explains. "In today's world, there's some feeling that things have been going downhill for our country and for society, and we're hoping there'll be


THESE PEOPLE NEED NEW INSPIRATION— NEW LEADERSHIP.
THEY NEED TO SEE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN WHAT'S ABOUT!
MMM... MORE'S TOGETHER CUTE ONE.
SHOOEEE
I MEAN, I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU, BILL, WHAT THE PEOPLE OF EARTH HAVE BEEN THROUGH!
A GREATER HERO TO FREE EARTH FROM ALIEN DOMINATION!
MOST OF US ADMIRE A THIRST WITH DECIDING DILEMMAS OR ANSWERS TO THESE PEOPLE
BUT JUST WHEN IT LOOKED LIKE EARTH MIGHT GET BACK ON ITS FEET THE STRAIN OF ENDLESS WARFARE AND ECOLOGICAL ABUSE BECAME TOO MUCH. EARTH WAS DESTROYED


Invisible Kid

Brainiac 5


Cosmic Boy

All Legionnaires Characters & Art Trademark & Copyright 1990 DC Comics, Inc.

some degree of identification that young people *can* really make a difference, and believing in the value of working together as a team and supporting one another will make a difference."

As for the *Legionnaires*' membership, Bierbaum indicates that decisions had to be made as to which characters should return. "For much of its developmental period, the plan was to retell Legion history, and Keith Giffen said, 'Let's find a period where I don't have to draw too many characters.' We selected a point that had most of the originals in it, but right before they readmitted certain characters like Star Boy and Dream Girl. If I remember correctly, that period falls between issues #349-#350 of *Adventure Comics*.

"After choosing the period, Keith managed to kill off three of the characters: Karate Kid, Princess Projectra and Chameleon Boy. He did that partly because he needed someone to die somewhere—it was a gigantic war story we were telling—and partly because he felt he could weed out the numbers a bit, so those characters ended up disappearing."

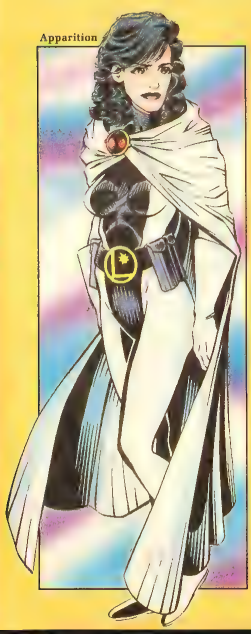
While the Legionnaires *are* based on members of the original Legion, Bierbaum promises that some characters will undergo major changes. "They're all supposed to be the same people who'll now grow and develop in independent patterns, because they're living lives that don't mirror what the other characters went through.

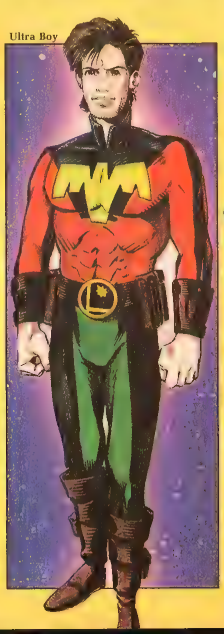
"The only character who's dramatically changing is Live Wire, the Lightning Lad character. We've pulled a real stunt with Lightning Lad in the other book, where we've said that for many years, he has *not* actually been Lightning Lad; he has the body of Lightning Lad, with the mind of an alien shape-shifter—"

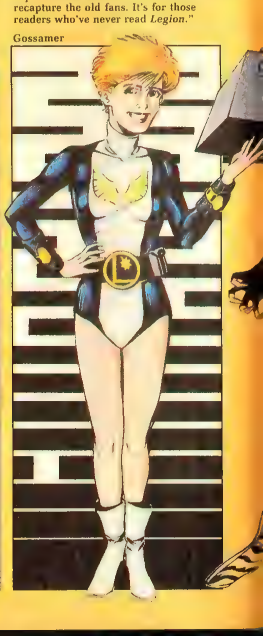
"That's a *telepathic* shape-shifter," interjects Mary Bierbaum, who has been listening closely.

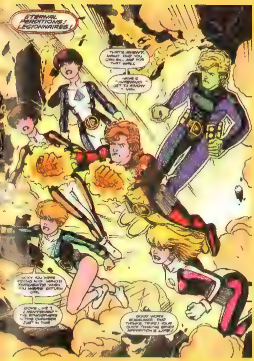
"It's projected onto him, so actually

"The primary goal of this new book," explains Tom Bierbaum, "is not to recapture the old fans. It's for those readers who've never read *Legion*."








ETERNAL PROTOCOL DISCHARGE!
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM?
I'LL BE OKAY IN A MINUTE!
WOW! A REAL ATTACK!
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE THIS!
LOOK, LIE DOWN AND REST!
I'M GOING TO CONTACT THE LEGION!
WE'RE ALREADY ON OUR WAY!

the character we've known has had a different personality than it used to be. Live Wire has the *original* personality: Rule-breaking and somewhat reckless. So while the old Lightning Lad was a true-blue, straightforward Legionnaire," says Tom Bierbaum, "the new one is a loose cannon. He'll stir things up a bit, especially since he had this romance with Saturn Girl, which was once the key romance in the Legion. Now that his personality has reverted to the original, he and Saturn Girl aren't getting along, and their relationship becomes an ongoing question.

"That's the big difference. The uniforms are all updated, many of the names have been changed, and some personality traits may be magnified subtly. A character like Shrinking Violet, for example, will be even more shy now, and her nervousness about the dangers of being a superhero will become big enough to be a plot element, as opposed to before when it was a subtle shading in the background.

"In terms of hot-headed, we have magnified Inferno's [Sun Boy's] characteristics. Hot-headed isn't exactly the right word, but he's a person who stretches the rules a little bit, whose womanizing is potentially more of a problem. His personality has evolved under other writers over the years, so we're seizing on that, trying to make him a bolder character."

Because the characters are starting from scratch, so to speak, other long-standing relationships will probably change as well. "We're dealing with the same people," he says, "but again, lives take different turns. With Light Lass, her boy friend used to be Timber Wolf, but Timber Wolf isn't in this batch of characters. Some of the earlier relationships still exist, but we'll also see some changes in them."

With the *Legionnaires*' large cast of characters, Bierbaum admits that readers will have trouble learning all the names, powers and costumes at first, but feels this is actually a selling point for the book. "There's a level of difficulty I think you want to achieve," he maintains.

Catspaw

Chameleon

Inferno

He's not the same old lad. Live Wire "is a loose cannon," says Tom Bierbaum. "He'll stir things up."

"We don't want anyone to read the book once and know all the characters. There's a certain joy that every *Legion* fan knows from memorizing who's who, and of course you want to make it enough that there's a sense of rereading the books and going back to the first page where the names are, lining them up and saying, 'Oh yeah, I like this guy.'

"That's the kind of thing most people of our generation remember when we were reading *Legion* for the first time. There's invariably the story about, 'Oh, I remember memorizing all the characters' names and powers,' and we're hoping to capture that level of involvement. You're not confused, but you work at it just enough so that you have to project yourself into the story."

Besides its "returning" members, *Legionnaires* will also feature several new characters intended to change the group's ethnic mix. "One of the reasons we needed to thin the ranks," Bierbaum claims, "was that with more than 20 characters, with the exception of two aliens, they were *all* white, Anglo Saxon-protestants, ethnically speaking. We needed to bring in some characters who changed that mix. Many of the ones we add in the near future will also help to diversify this group.

"In terms of the individual characters, it's really hard to characterize what we were going for, other than something a little different in each case, a power that was unique.

"Catspaw was actually conceived by Jason Pearson, who was working on the other book at the time. She's another take on the quasi-animal character, somebody who has been experimented on by the Dominators, and turned into a very animalistic person. We hope to play that up, not necessarily in a light vein, but she

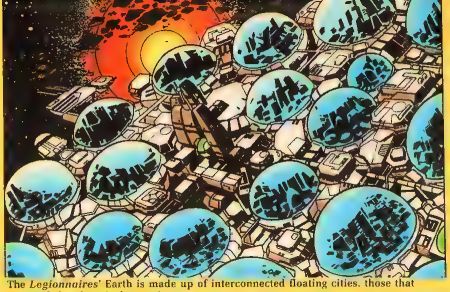
won't be a vicious animal, although she has that in her. We'll try to inject a little humor in terms of, what if somebody who had—"

"The characteristics of a house cat," finishes Mary Bierbaum.

"Yeah, what the behavioral characteristics of a house cat would be like, and we hope to humorize that.

"Dragonmage," Tom Bierbaum continues, "is an attempt to put sorcery into the mix. He's one of the characters who'll be new at what he's doing, and very inexperienced, so this will be a learning process for him. You feel that he's not as proficient with his powers as the other members, and that's partly a way to keep him under control, and not have him solve every problem they encounter. We will have that problem with him in the future, but he's not good enough yet. After a period of time, readers will say, 'Come on, make him good enough now,' and then we'll have to say, 'What can we do with him to balance that out?'

"The other new character is Computo. She's taken from *Legion* history.

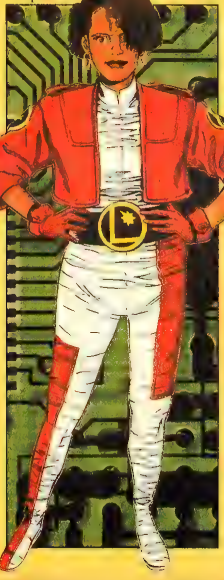


The *Legionnaires'* Earth is made up of interconnected floating cities, those that survived the planet's destruction.

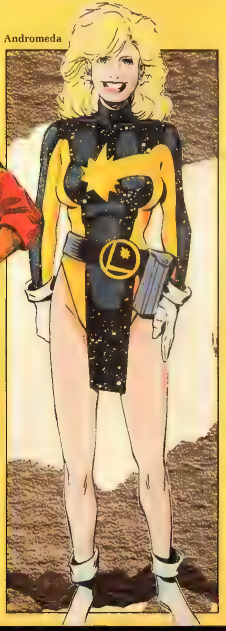
[Computo is Danielle Foccart, sister of Jacques Foccart, the Invisible Kid]. That was Mary's thinking. About a year or two ago, she said, 'There's this character running around who should be a teenager right now, and it would be fun to bring her in.' I was pretty skeptical—we had all these other characters; why did we need to worry about her? But one day, we thought it would help the group's ethnic balance.

Dragonmage

Computo



Andromeda



"These are kids who have been brought together at wartime to form this group, because they have super powers," says the writer.

she has an easy-to-explain power and would fit right in."

At this point, the Bierbaums already have the first six issues of *Legionnaires* plotted, with another three waiting for approval from DC. "The first six-issue arc," says Tom Bierbaum, "will be a number of confrontations with the members of the new Fatal 5, culminating in a fairly dramatic big fight.

"Interspersed within that storyline will be a sense of this new Earth space station, which is having problems in terms of the physical structure, which doesn't quite fit together yet. Much of what they have to do in the early stories is repair things and solve emergencies that arise, but we also get the sense of a shattered world that's trying to put itself together again.

"The story we tentatively have planned to follow up #6 is a catch-your-breath, change-of-pace, 'day in the life' story. We'll have had six issues which have been fairly frenetic and exciting action, and we want to pull back, and show what these kids do on an average day, what their routine is like, and weave into that the various storylines, characterizations and so forth."

One of the problems many readers had with the new *Legion of Super Heroes* was its inaccessibility, and the difficulty in keeping track of the multitude of characters and complex plotlines. Do the creators of *Legionnaires* hope to remedy that situation? "That's probably a fair description of one of our goals," answers Bierbaum. "We are *clearly* hoping that between the two books, there'll be something out there for everyone.

"The primary goal of this new book is *not* to recapture the old fans. It's for those new readers who've never read *Legion* before, but we very much hope that most of the criticisms of people who didn't like the mother book will be answered in this one. We read the mail, and we know full well that many of them will never be satisfied, but that's the constitutional right of every comics fan. We're hoping when the books come out, most people will say, 'I didn't like the mother book, but I do like this one.' We think it'll be a real good time for anyone who has ever been a *Legion* fan, who may not be reading the book now, to pick up both of them."

In addition to their work on *Legionnaires*, the Bierbaums will also write *Legion of Super Heroes*, which begins a major new storyline in issue #43. "We're going to tell what we think is the most all-out Legion story we can

(continued on page 52)

Kid Quantum

Matter-Eater Lad

Triad

SPLIT DECISIONS

Stefan Petrucha & Barry Crain are going out on a limb with "Counterparts."

NEAR AS I CAN FIGURE, 'CAUSE OF THE CONCUSSION, TPG* WON'T TAKE. YOU'LL NEVER HAVE A PERSONALITY AGAIN.
OH NO! NO!
*TEMPORARY PERSONALITY GRAFTS

The luxury of another personality is lost on Hieronymous Jones. "He'll be forced to live his life as a blank slate," notes creator Stefan Petrucha.

By KIM HOWARD JOHNSON

The strangest hero in comics is also the strangest team in comics. Bizarre? *Counterparts* creators Stefan Petrucha and Barry Crain don't mind a bit.

"Sigmund Freud says that everybody has a divided persona, that *nobody* has a single identity. I think we're all divided in one way or another.

"One of the issues that *Counterparts* addresses is how real *anyone's* personality is—how much of it is of our own making, and how much have we picked up from our experiences," says Petrucha, the writer of *Nexus the Liberator* and *Squalor* (CS #13).

Though it all sounds a bit serious, *Counterparts* is anything but heavy. Hieronymous Jones lives in New York City in the not-too-distant future. "The ozone's gone and the Arctic has been melting, which has required them to build a large sea wall around Manhattan. There's a powerful police state operating within the city, and masses of homeless floating about," says Petrucha. "The population is divided between the ultra-rich and the poor. TPG [Temporary Personality Grafts] is invented, which allows people to adopt whatever personality they like, from a famous movie star to a fictional character to general types. The legal drug is produced by a corporation called Sentimental Journeys. Unfortunately, it represses, and possibly destroys, their original personality. So, the vast majority of New Yorkers are addicts who no longer have their own personality.

"Our hero finds out from his doctor that the drug no longer works on him at all, and he'll be forced to live the rest of his life as a blank slate. His significant other takes him to an experimental lab at Sentimental Journeys, but something goes wrong, and he is injected with *six* personalities, which gravitate to different parts of his body, and rip apart," the writer notes.

"The head is Buckley, the intellectual; the torso has the personality of Jake, a vain bodybuilder; the right arm is Bogie, a hard-boiled detective arm; the left arm is a romantic lover called Don; the right leg is Kik Li, a martial arts expert; and the left leg is Tootsie, a female computer expert," says artist Barry Crain, known for his work on *Sonic Disruptors*.

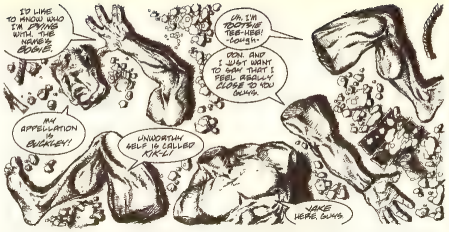
"At the same time, the homeless have been mysteriously disappearing,

hauled in by the Ink Police—cops owned by the corporations," explains Petrucha. "The Counterparts, seeing this terrible injustice, decide to attack the police, making themselves outlaws. They find out that the homeless are being used to create the experimental version of the drug.

"They adopt Hieronymous Jones as their secret identity; they have to pretend they have a personality. Along the way, they encounter a mysterious gentleman called the Chicken Man, who gives ice and water to the homeless, and is in cahoots with Bernardo, who's trying to lead a rebellion."

Jones—all six of him—vows vengeance on the corporation responsible for his plight, the same corporation that's controlling the population with Temporary Personality Crafts. All of the body parts try to end the entire operation, working together—and separately. "Specific body parts find out that their personalities are actually relatives of the supporting cast. It's a big emotional moment," laughs Crain.

The supporting cast includes Sherman Derkle, head of the corporation, and Sherman Derkle Jr., who is one of the Jehovah's Witless, a religious sect that believes taking the Personality


I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHO I'M SPEAKING WITH, THE HANDS ABOVE!
OH, I'M TORTOISE TEA-HEE! ENOUGH-
OOH, AND I JUST WANT TO SAY THAT I FEEL REALLY CLOSE TO YOU GUYS.
MY APPELLATION IS BUCKLEY!
UNWORTHY SELF IS CALLED KIK-LI
JAKE HERE, GUYS

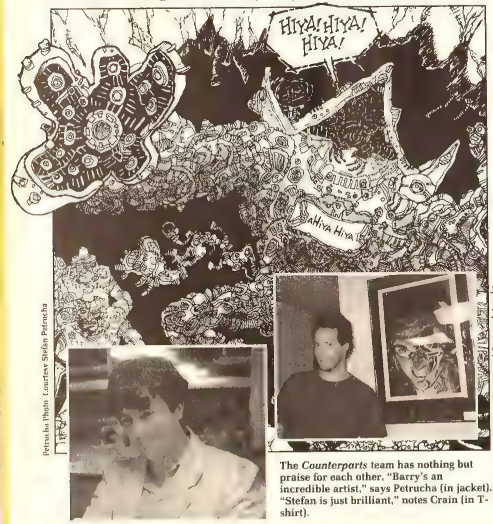
All Counterparts Art: Barry Crain/Courtesy Tundra

Exploring the background of *Counterparts*, Petrucha explains, "People have an innate fascination with the body."

Gels is against God's law.

Petrucha says his here is actually six characters, and that's the way he had to write it. "I started off with stereotypes and the notion of TPC, the drug that people slap on their heads to give themselves personalities. Any personality derived that way would have to be an established character to some extent, so I picked six types that would be interesting to work with. I originally worked with a book on improvisation that listed about 100 different personality types, and picked the ones I thought would create a balanced group."

This wild premise forced the artist to be extra careful when executing the scripts. "I can't remember how many times I had to erase different hands and thumbs to make sure I had the correct one," laughs Crain. "We should award some kind of Tundra No-Prize for people finding those errors! After a while it became easy, but at first I was always putting the thumb on the wrong side."



Petrucha Photo: Courtesy Stefan Petrucha

Crain Photo: Courtesy 23rd Century Artworks

The *Counterparts* team has nothing but praise for each other. "Barry's an incredible artist," says Petrucha (in jacket). "Stefan is just brilliant," notes Crain (in T-shirt).

It has been a long road to the comic shops for *Counterparts*, notes Petrucha, who came up with the idea for the series over two years ago.

"I was working at First Comics, and went to a comics store to see what was popular at the time," says Petrucha. "It must have been Clive Barker or Stephen King week, because *every* cover had these dismembered limbs on it! I thought, 'Gee, body parts are big—how the hell am I going to do a series about *that*?' I wondered what would happen if all of the body parts had personalities, and spent a week thinking about it. People have an innate fascination with the body, and I tried to play on that in a non-horror book."

A short-lived 1960s superhero called Captain Marvel (no relation to the classic Fawcett character) split his body in a similar fashion by shouting, "Split!" But the writer says that had *no* influence on this creation. "The big difference is that the Counterparts are not just limbs, they're people," Petrucha says. "One of the things Barry does beautifully is get these limbs to emote."

The artist notes that he too was unaware of that curious '60s creation while working on *Counterparts*. "I do remember a similar being on the animated *Star Trek*, an alien that would disengage himself from his body, and limbs would fly around separately."

"One of the things Barry does beautifully is get these limbs to emote," enthuses Petrucha.

Crain became involved with *Counterparts* when he was contacted by First Comics, where Petrucha had submitted his script. "At first, it was going to be called *Body Parts*, but then the movie came out and bollixed up that plan. The first issue was all scripted, and I had done the first issue pencils when First stopped publishing," says Crain.

"Then, it was another couple of months before I re-acquired the rights, and that summer we got Tundra interested," says Petrucha. "It was about a year-and-a-half for the entire turnaround."

Petrucha notes that Crain came up with the series' new title. "We were reviewing our contract with Tundra, and the last line of it says, 'This contract must be executed in six

"Most of the comics out there take themselves way too seriously," says artist Barry Crain, but *Counterparts* "was a hysterical script."

counterparts," says Petrucha. "Barry said, 'Counterparts!' And that's where the title came from."

Since it has literally taken years for *Counterparts* to see print, the creators needed to be concerned with consistency. Petrucha's scripts were virtually completed before the project left First, but Crain wasn't so lucky.

"There was a shift in style for me between the initial issue done for First and the changeover to Tundra. My feelings toward the book changed, because I felt like I had a little more editorial freedom at Tundra. I went back to some of my original ideas that I had thrown out, certain character designs that I still liked," says Crain, noting that he's being spoiled because he gets to ink his own pencils.

"It's going to be tough when I don't have the luxury of inking my own stuff anymore. It's a great way to learn, plus I get to draw really loosely! Stuff that I would never get away with when someone else is inking my work, I can get away with here," he announces. "I know the smudge in the corner is going to be a car or a building."

Crain and Petrucha say their collaboration was very smooth, even though they had never met. Most of Crain's previous comics work has been for lesser-known series or one-shots, and the artist is unfamiliar to many readers, but Petrucha says that's all about to change when readers see *Counterparts*.

"Barry's an incredible artist, and he has a great career ahead of him," says Petrucha. "I think he has just exploded in the last couple of years, and the stuff he's doing on *Counterparts* is amazing. Barry's brilliant! I couldn't be happier with the work he has done. He has a very emotive style. He makes the city look alive in this very weird, almost underground way, slightly reminiscent of Robert Crumb. He has a unique style, and he has done wonderful things with the scripts. It's a *very* enjoyable collaboration."

Crain is equally effusive about Petrucha's scripts. "Stefan is just brilliant," he says. "It was a hysterical script. It's not very often that you can stop and laugh out loud at something. There are only a handful of comics where you can do that, and this is one of them. I hope people will react the same way."

Crain agrees that his work in *Counterparts* represents a very different style than his more cartoonish art on *Sonic Disruptors*, *Impossible Man Summer Specials* or *First Adventures*.

"That came about in part because *Counterparts* was going to be a black-and-white book, and I felt I had to do something to fill the page. I couldn't take shortcuts and have the colorist do some of my work for me. It made me nervous, and I felt like I had to come up with something more dense," says Crain. "I was looking at people like Bill Sienkiewicz, Simon Bisley and Kyle Baker. Kyle was a big influence, though I don't know if you can see it in the book; it's much denser than anything Kyle Baker would do. There's some Eddie Campbell in there, and Geof Darrow."

Crain also revised his style to suit the Petrucha script. "I thought it was such a loopy, surreal sort of story. There's no attempt to explain questions like, 'Why don't the stumps bleed?' 'How can they talk, how can they breathe?' Anyone who has read Stefan's *Squalor* or *Meta-4* knows he takes a more emotional, delirious approach to his writing, and I thought that should be reflected, rather than trying to do it straightlaced. Mainly, it just fit. The style seemed to work, and I did what I thought felt right—it wasn't very calculated."

Counterparts involved some very unique problems from an artistic point-of-view, he notes. "I immediately saw that I was going to do close-ups of hands gesturing. How do you put a personality into a close-up of a thumb and a forefinger with the caption, 'Hey, we've got to stick together, gang?' I hope I pulled it off."

(continued on page 66)

Lance Barnes Art: Barry Crain Copyright 1993 Stefan Petrucha & Barry Crain

Running along the same satirical vein as *Counterparts*, *Lane Barnes, Post-Nuke Dick* follows the adventures of the man responsible for World War III.

After 42 years in comics, John Romita still marvels at Jack Kirby's talent & his own son's artistry.

By PAT JANKIEWICZ

the AMAZING ILLUSTRATOR

Legendary comics artist John Romita Sr. wears many hats. As Marvel's art director, his slick approach set Marvel's "house style," and he illustrates much of its advertising. Although he has drawn every Marvel character and designed both Wolverine and the Punisher, he's still best known for his work on *The Amazing Spider-Man*.

Romita faced a Herculean task replacing Steve Ditko as the wall-crawler's artist. It's a tribute to Romita's talent that his version of Spider-Man is considered the definitive one, known to the public through T-shirts, cartoons, posters and dolls.

He drew the cover of the company's biography (*Marvel: Five Fabulous Decades*) and logos for Marvel's comics company and California-based cartoon studio ("I wish I was paid every time they used it," he chuckles. "A penny apiece, and I would be a millionaire!"), and even designed the Spider-Man balloon used in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Romita Sr. is likable and modest as he humbly tries to downplay his achievements. The silver-haired illustrator (who resembles one of his drawings) is so nice and down-to-Earth that it's no wonder Stan Lee describes him as "the closest thing to a saint." The pair have had a long and prolific career, teaming up on such titles as *Spider-Man* and *Fantastic Four*. "We always worked well together," the artist states happily. "In fact, I worked for Stan six months before he knew me. I was ghosting artwork for an inker; it was fairly common at the time. I would do the pencils, the guy would represent them as his and Stan would accept them, then he would ink them and split the money with me. I finally told Stan, 'I've been working for you, and now I would like a shot of my own,' so he gave me work."

Lee and Romita's output represents some of Marvel's greatest efforts. "Stan always said I was the best storyteller," Romita says proudly. "Unfortunately, I'm a perfectionist—I never accepted the damn figures. Stan always said, 'Don't be so finicky, because the best you're gonna do is not gonna be that much better than the worst you do.' He was absolutely right! I understood the theory, but I just couldn't make myself accept the drawings. It was a terrible problem for me moneywise, because I didn't earn as much as I might have."

The artist enjoyed working with Lee. "Stan was always alert and intense. He was the only editor who paid attention to what you did. Other editors would say, 'Is it done? Is it 10 pages? Fine, here's your paycheck; now go.' They never gave you any feedback, except maybe to grumble, 'This don't look that good!' They never gave encouragement. Stan was the *first* guy to encourage me.

Part One

"In '65, when I went back to Marvel (after drawing romance comics for DC) and did *Daredevil*, I found Stan to be an even more intense character. He was so full of energy; when we worked out a plot, we would verbally work out plots—no notes, no typewritten pages, just verbal—he would do a full range of characters. He would do the women, the men and the villains (in the story)," the artist smiles at the memory. "He would jump around the office, strangling and throwing himself over furniture. It was very exciting!"

Romita explodes with laughter. "I used to look out his door and see people popping their heads out of their offices to see what all the noise was. I got a kick out of his histrionics."

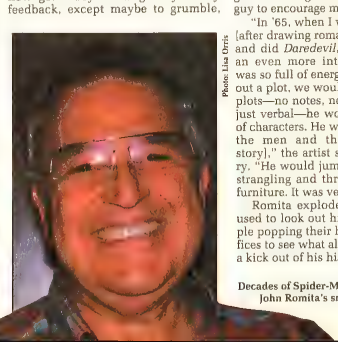


Photo: Lisa Orris

Decades of Spider-Man will never dampen John Romita's smile.

The illustrator found Lee to be a great teacher. "Stan was very animated and quick to give you advice. He would say, 'No, you're not getting enough excitement; you gotta throw yourself into it. The characters should be like silent screen actors. Overacting, exaggerating their attitudes and emotions.' It was like going to school."

One innovative tactic Marvel used was promoting its writers and artists as if they were baseball stars, right down to nicknames like "Stan (The Man) Lee," "Jazzy John Romita" and "Jack (King) Kirby." "Those names came from Stan's fertile mind," Romita reveals. "I always liked to say Stan gave us nicknames in lieu of raises! That was his way of keeping our minds off pay increases.

"Stan did make us well-known," he concedes. "I always felt, in my 15 years of comics before I started doing *Daredevil* at Marvel, that it was egotistical to put your name on them. At DC, the tradition was to *not* sign your art, like you were too self-important. Many guys didn't sign their names because they were ashamed of being in comics. Stan made the readers aware of what went on behind the scenes."

When Romita began working at Marvel, he actually thought his career had ended. "I went to Stan after doing eight years of love stories for DC. They ran out of work, so I went to Stan and told him I just wanted to ink; I was burned out as a penciller. At age 35, I thought my pencilling career was over. Stan comforted me, told me, 'By all means [just ink],' never meaning to keep that arrangement," Romita says fondly. "I inked one story, a Don Heck *Avengers*, and next thing I knew, I was pencilling *Daredevil*! I guess Stan slipped me a mickey."

SLOW-MOVING MATT MURDOCK COULD NEVER HOPE TO MAKE IT IN TIME...!
BUT THIS IS THE SORT OF CHALLENGE I...
..THAT DAREDEVIL THRIVES ON!
GOOD THING MY CLOTHES ARE MADE OF STRINK-RESISTANT MATERIAL...
...OR ELSE I COULD NEVER WEAR THEM AFTER THEY'VE BEEN CRUSHED LIKE THIS!
NOW I'M ALL SET TO UH-OH!
I FORGOT ONE...T-T-F-...F-NO...
I'LL BE NEEDING MY TRUSTY BILLY CLUB IN A FEW SECONDS...
AND THERE WON'T BE TIME TO THROW IT THEN!
SO, I'LL JUST DO IT NOW!
THWIPP!
CLICK!
FOUR MINUTES LEFT...TO MAKE IT CLEAN ACROSS TOWN! DAREDEVIL CAN DO IT WITH TIME TO SPARE!
THIS IS WHAT I NEEDED! THE WIND IN MY FACE...THE WORLD AT MY FEET!

All Spider-Man, Daredevil, Fantastic Four, Captain America & Associated Characters ™ & Copyright 1966,1967,1970,1983 Marvel Entertainment Group

His first *Daredevil* adventure was "too sedate" for Stan Lee, who called in Jack Kirby for a breakdown. "I used that for pacing and storytelling," notes Romita.

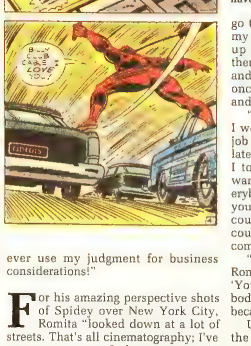
Romita also worked with another Marvel legend, artist Jack Kirby. "My first two *Daredevil* stories were issues #12 and #13, when I took over for Wally Wood. Stan asked me to pencil all this [action] stuff after all my DC love stories. He loved my splash page, but when I brought in the first three pages, he said, 'These are much too dull. This *isn't* the Marvel way to tell a story; it's too sedate.'

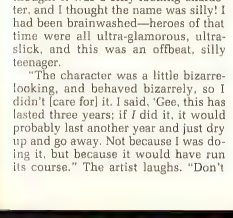
"He picked up the phone, called Kirby and said, 'Jack, I got John Romita here doing a *Daredevil*. I want you to do a breakdown.' What he called a breakdown was a rough layout of the story. He told the story in about five minutes over the phone. The next day, Kirby brought in 10 pages broken down. They were very rough, and he paced it on the side of the panel."

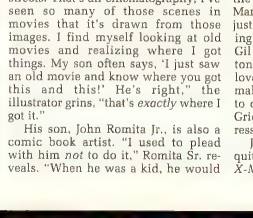
Romita marvels at Kirby's approach. "While I had Matt Murdock change into Daredevil in one panel and go into the hall in the next, Kirby had him leap out a window not even knowing if there was a fire escape there, but he found a window to jump out of next to a lamppost and landed on top of an automobile. He had Daredevil stride two speeding cars up the West Side Highway! I used that for pacing and storytelling. That was one of the few times I worked interiors with Jack. Many times I inked his covers, and made corrections on those."

While he's noted for drawing Marvel's webbed hero, Spider-Man's

NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME IN DAYS... I'M FREE... REALLY ALIVE!
I'M NO LONGER ACTING... NO LONGER PRETENDING!
I'M DOING WHAT I DO BEST... WHAT I WAS MEANT TO DO!!
KAWANN







Daredevil Pages Art: John Romita/Bruce Timm vs. Jack Kirby

"I always focus on those scenes where the guy's not sure," explains Romita. "I would have him agonizing over what to do."

appeal was lost on Romita at first. "Frankly, when I first saw *Spider-Man*, it was our second bestselling book, and I didn't think much of it," he admits. "When Stan asked me to take it over, two things ran through my mind: I thought it was a silly-looking character, and I thought the name was silly! I had been brainwashed—heroes of that time were all ultra-glamorous, ultra-slick, and this was an offbeat, silly teenager.

"The character was a little bizarre-looking, and behaved bizarrely, so I didn't [care for] it, I said, 'Gee, this has lasted three years; if *I* did it, it would probably last another year and just dry up and go away. Not because I was doing it, but because it would have run its course." The artist laughs. "Don't ever use my judgment for business considerations!"

For his amazing perspective shots of Spidey over New York City, Romita "looked down at a lot of streets. That's all cinematography; I've seen so many of those scenes in movies that it's drawn from those images. I find myself looking at old movies and realizing where I got things. My son often says, 'I just saw an old movie and know where you got this and this!' He's right," the illustrator grins, "that's *exactly* where I got it."

His son, John Romita Jr., is also a comic book artist. "I used to plead with him *not* to do it," Romita Sr. reveals. "When he was a kid, he would go to bed, and I would be working at my drawing table, then he would wake up for school and I would still be there, like a sap. I was always very late and very slow. I remember more than once, he would have tears in his eyes and say, 'Daddy, you didn't sleep!'

"John would ask, 'Aren't you tired?' I would say, 'I'll rest when I turn the job in.' I reminded him of that years later when he started drawing comics. I told him, 'Are you crazy? Do you wanna get into a business where everybody else in the house is asleep and you're still making noise?' He said, 'I couldn't help myself.' My son just couldn't stop himself from being a comics artist!

"He got a job at Marvel despite me," Romita states. "I told him not to. I said, 'You're gonna get the job and everybody will say, 'Sure, you have the job because your father works there!' "

Ultimately, father and son designed the Hobgoblin and female Captain Marvel. "John did the Hobgoblin, and I just inked. I have a habit of overpowering with my inking," he laughs. "Ask Gil Kane, and you'll catch the undertones of disgust in his voice! Still, I love the Hobgoblin. With the black female Captain Marvel, John was trying to do the beautiful black actress Pam Grier. I had a drawing of a black waitress I knew. I had her in mind."

John Romita Jr., of course, became quite successful drawing *The Uncanny X-Men* and his father's former titles,

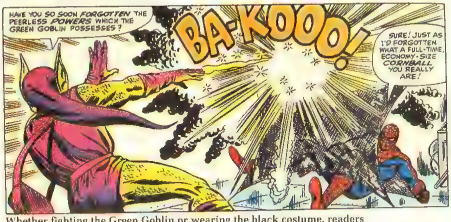
As Marvel's Art Director, Romita has had the opportunity to draw just about *every* character at some point or another.

NO! PARKER ISN'T HERE! WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO BE... A LOST AND FOUND DEPARTMENT?!
HE'S PROBABLY OUT STEALING HUBCAPS SOMEWHERE!
EMPTY-HEADED TEENAGERS! THEY'RE ALL ALIKE!

Art: John Romita/Mike Esposito

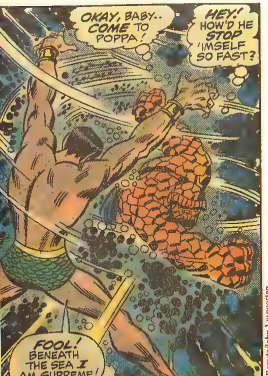
"I got to like the characters very much," Romita says about the *Spider-Man* cast. "They were well-rounded, and it became a joy to work with them."

Amazing Spider-Man and *Daredevil*. "I was pleasantly surprised," the proud father declares. "My biggest fear was that he would get into my business and *fail*, which is not uncommon. There are many artists in my position whose sons wanted to do comics and couldn't. Joe Kubert and I have a great affinity for each other. We say, 'We're lucky, 'cause we've got talented sons [Adam and Andy Kubert].' Imagine having a son you couldn't discuss your business with without bringing up painful memories. It would be heartbreaking. I was terrified he would fail in the business, and I would have an unhappy son for the rest of my life. Instead, John's so good, he has exceeded my expectations!"


HAVE YOU SO SOON FORGOTTEN THE PEERLESS POWERS WHICH THE GREEN GOBLIN POSSESSES?
BA-KOOO!
SURE! JUST AS I'D FORGOTTEN WHAT A FULL-TIME, ECONOMY-SIZE CONTROL YOU REALLY ARE!

Art: John Romita/Mike Esposito

Whether fighting the Green Goblin or wearing the black costume, readers "always accepted him as Spider-Man," notes a surprised Romita.



Art: John Romita/John Verpoorten

The artist was faced with the Herculean task of following Jack Kirby's tenure on the *Fantastic Four*.

Romita's own beginnings were quite humble. "I was born in a semi-tenement in 1930. My father raised five kids on $20 a week during the Depression. I would draw on whatever paper I could scrounge up. The only paper I could get was butcher paper to trace other people's work. I would ask the butcher for an extra stretch [of it] I could draw on.

"When I got married, it was the first time I slept in a steam-heated room. My wife and I were both 'cold flat babies.' I bought *Captain America* #1 and *Superman* #1 when I was eight years old, and I traced them a thousand times. I had the foresight to have my Dad buy me two copies. I put one in a bag and traced the other till there was no wax on the page." Unfortunately, he groans, "I never kept 'em!

"My whole generation comes from that background. Jack Kirby's from the lower East Side, Bob Kane came from [the Bronx]. I was born in 1930 when they were doing all those things and I regret missing out on the first wave of comics because I was too young."

Although he's one of the world's best-known comics artists, Romita originally had other plans. "I wanted to be another Norman Rockwell," he laughs. "In school, I studied and dreamed of becoming a magazine illustrator. When I got out of school, magazines were starting to fade, as *Colliers* and *The Saturday Evening Post* went out of business. It looked like a shrinking market for illustrations, so I got nervous.

"To make a living, I went into comics. It was usually the last refuge of unsuccessful illustrators. When I got

in, comics were throwaway trash articles that people were ashamed to admit they were doing!"

As for his cinematic art style, "I was a movie buff from age six on," he notes. "I was hooked on the Lone Ranger, Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon serials. Everything I drew was cinema-oriented. When Disney features started coming out, I drew all the Disney characters. I have a well-rounded background: I've drawn humor, animals, superheroes and detectives!"

The artist was later honored for his film technique. "In one *Spider-Man* story I did, where he fights the Rhino [#41], I used many cinematic tricks. I had close-ups, long shots, panoramic shots, camera angles, and it was picked out for *Exploring the Film*, a film textbook. They used the entire 20-page story as a demonstration of cinematic technique. It was *very* satisfying."

When handling a character, Romita has one basic rule. "You do him the way the reader expects to see him. My son felt the same obligation, and I feel more artists should. Now it's more individualistic, and everybody's putting their own stamp on it. It has led to the expansion of this industry. There were times when we would wonder what the future was gonna be, and I think they showed us how to keep it fresh and not stagnate. These young guys came up with some great gimmicks."

What does the comics legend think of the glamorous image of some of today's artists? "I have the same feeling that Mickey Mantle or Joe DiMaggio must have," he shrugs. "I wish the big money had been there when I was doing it. It would be nice to have a bigger nest egg than I have. In fact, some of these guys are going to make more on one book than I will have made in *an entire career*. I've worked for Marvel for 25 years, not to mention my first stint with Stan before Marvel. I've spent *42 years* in the business, and I'm not going to make as much money as they will on *one* book. I don't hold it against them; it's just fate. That's life."

As Romita is known as the definitive Spider-Man artist, one wonders how he feels about Todd McFarlane's radical redesign of the character. "Well, he didn't do it the way I would have," he admits. "At first, it was disturbing to me, but not because of ego. [Post-Romita *Spider-Man* artists] Ross Andru and Gil Kane did it differently than I would have, but I never felt an objection to those, because they always did the character the way he looked.

"The new artists do him very differently. Long and thin. Thin ankles, thin knees, wrists. They animate him much better than I did, and I think they distort him very well. They throw him into spider-like poses more than I did; I tend to make him look graceful.

"Stan had to constantly remind me to make him more awkward-looking, because a spider *isn't* graceful-looking," he explains. "I was a little put off by the new artists' approach, because they would change his look, and sometimes made it look like there wasn't a man in the costume! I felt that would never get by the readers. The readers, of course, never made a squawk. Spider-Man became bigger and more popular, so obviously, I was wrong.

"Personally, when I see the character isn't 5'10", 160 pounds, I don't believe Peter Parker is under that costume anymore, and I get mad. As a reader, it's like having Buddy Hackett play Spider-Man."

Nevertheless, whatever the heroic image, Spidey keeps on web-slinging. "There's something about Spider-Man that *can* take different drawings and approaches," Romita observes. "For instance, the success of the black costume. Spider-Man as we see him—red and blue—existed for 25 years. Then, Jim Shooter [Marvel's former editor-in-chief] did a mini-series called *Secret Wars*, about our superheroes being yanked off Earth and taken to another planet. Spider-Man underwent a change with an alien, and found himself in an all-black costume with a white spider on the chest.

"I thought, 'This is *crazy*! How can you take a 25-year-old character and change him so drastically?' They said, 'Don't worry, it'll be fine!' " He shakes his head in disbelief. "It was hugely successful! He has come back to red and blue, but to this day many fans say, 'I want him back in the black costume,' while others say, 'I love him in the red and blue'. Not *once* do they say, 'I don't think of that as Spider-Man!' They *always* accepted him as Spider-Man. That's a hell of an accomplishment."

Romita suspects the key to Spidey's popularity is "the personal life. The fact that it's about a guy with misgivings constantly wondering what the hell he's doing it for, but he feels that, if somebody's in a well and you can crawl down and save them, you have that obligation. He feels that responsibility is the basis, having the power to *do* something.

"Responsibility constantly wracks Peter Parker. He has given up many times, saying, 'I can't do this anymore,' and he has come close to a nervous breakdown more than once. That confusion makes him a much better character. Superman has no doubts; he's obliged to set out for truth, justice and the American way, and it's very cut-and-dried.

"Peter Parker is different," he continues. "His uncle died because he walked away from responsibility. It's a very hackneyed storyline, but it still works because the premise is sound. This is a human being who isn't sure he's doing the right thing, even when he *is*. He wonders, 'Why am I doing this? Am I an egomaniac? Am I crazy? Did the spider powers twist my mind?'

(continued on page 52)

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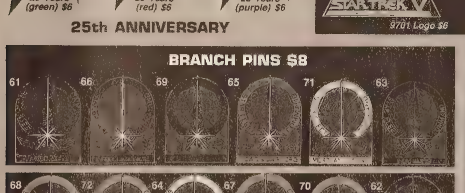

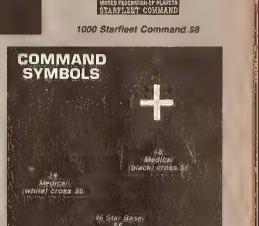

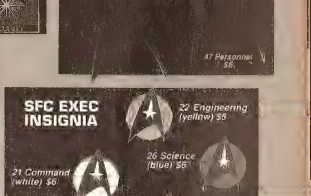

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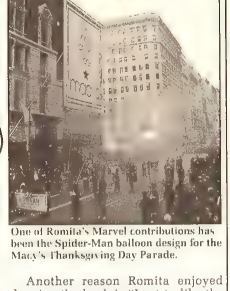
Romita

(continued from page 49)

"That was our whole key approach [his self-doubt]. He would throw away the mask every so often and say, 'This isn't doing me or other people any good!' I would have him on the edge of a building with his head in his hands, agonizing over what to do, almost like Christ in the Garden," Romita notes. "I milked that stuff. I always focus on those crossroad scenes where the guy's not sure. That's when the music swells and the camera pulls back. If they could put music in a comic book, it would be in those scenes."



One of Romita's Marvel contributions has been the Spider-Man balloon design for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Another reason Romita enjoyed drawing the book is "I got to like the characters very much. I started to realize that the characters were so well-developed, all you needed to do was add a villain and a setting, then the characters would write the rest of the story. It was like throwing one element into a chemical compound: You know how the other chemicals will react. The plots almost wrote themselves because we knew how the characters would behave. Peter Parker would do one thing, Aunt May would do another, and J. Jonah Jameson, another. The characters were well-rounded, and it became a joy to work with them. They were like trained animals."

After six years, however, John Romita quit his amazing run on *Spider-Man*, "because I got a little punchy. I was getting tired, and worried that we would repeat ourselves. I knew it was time to get off the book."

TO BE CONTINUED

Legionnaires

(continued from page 40)

come up with," Tom Bierbaum enthuses. "It will be a six-part story with a big battle; the closest thing to it that has gone before is the 'Great Darkness Saga.' We don't intend to equal the 'Great Darkness,' and we're not trying to imitate it, but it'll be a great battle.

"The villain will be Mordru, and we're hoping it will be a great story. The very first Mordru story is considered by many as one of the best—if not *the* best—Legion stories."

"For me personally, as a fan," adds Bierbaum, "I was always less enchanted with the magic stories. When you have spaceships and ray guns, how do you fit magic comfortably into that? That'll be one of our challenges coming up: To do a real, all-out six-part story where the opposition is magic."

Bierbaum gives high marks to the artistic teams on both books, pointing to the high burnout rates on most team titles: "As long as Chris Sprouse keeps cranking out that fantastic artwork [on *Legionnaires*], and Karl Story's inks are very valuable to the book as well.

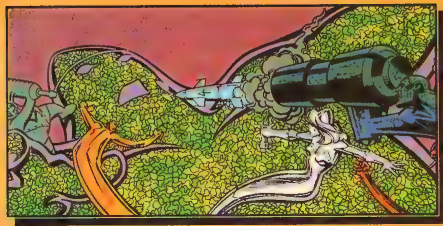
"The new artists on *Legion* are penciller Stuart Immonen and inker Ron Boyd. As much as it sounds like the standard hype, we're really pleased with their work.

"I also believe that colorist Tom McCraw will be instrumental to this new book's success. When we finally see the color version of the comics, it really makes a big difference, and nobody has a tougher job than Tom, who must keep track of all these characters. That really applies to everyone else as well. The Legion books demand more work than almost any other comics because of their complexity and the number of characters. It's very rare in the history of the Legion that you had really excellent art that lasted very long, because the poor artists burned out, so we're very lucky to have such talented people on both books."

For those readers who may still be undecided about picking up *Legionnaires*, Tom Bierbaum has these words: "The first is a general pitch, in terms of what the book's feel will be. The basics are we have many good teen characters, and they're really drawn and written to feel and act like teen characters. We're also set in the future, so there are unlimited possibilities in settings, characters, science and alien characters. That combination is the classic Legion formula which has had so much appeal over the years. Put those things together in a good package, and people will get excited."

Those offbeat elementals are getting polished up for action.

Metal Men and all characters and elements © & ™ (copyright line) 1993 DC Comics Inc.



"The Metal Men may have been too silly for some people," fears Mike Carlin, but possible revitalization would be fun for the writer. Look for 'em in '93.

It may have survived crises, wars and even armageddon, but is the DC Universe ready for the *Metal Men*? Mike Carlin and Dan Jurgens think the answer is yes, and they've taken over the revival of what may be DC's most peculiar characters.

Comics' original "elementals," six robots created by the enigmatic Doc Magnus, have been very seldom seen since their title's most recent revival nearly 16 years ago. Still, Carlin says they have a strong appeal to many Silver Age fans, including himself.

"They've always been a favorite of mine, and I know many pros feel the same way about them. I think it's because their tone is so different, compared to all the other DC and Marvel heroes. When we started this project, we thought there was a chance of tapping into fans who like some of the more humorous stuff," says Carlin. "Still, at the same time, it's a pretty straightforward adventure story."

Despite the trend in recent years toward darker, grittier characters, Carlin says the Metal Men haven't strayed from their original concept.

"It's not a re-start, it's not a revamp in the negative sense. We definitely raise the stakes in this series. There's a new development that harks back to their origins that we never found out about, so what we're doing is selling you 'the lost *Metal Men* tapes.' We're showing you the days before the Metal Men's first appearance in *Showcase* in the hopes of adding to the legend, and maybe explaining Will Magnus' schizophrenic personality over the years. He has been a happy guy, a crazy guy, a mad guy, a bad guy, and I think we've come up with a good explanation for *why* he does that," reveals Carlin, who says Magnus will be consistent with later DC appearances.

"He's still going to be wearing his orange plaid jacket," Carlin laughs. "We're just going to pick up right where Magnus is now, and give a little bit of background on where he came from. We're going to point him in a totally new direction when the [four-issue] series is over."

Although Jurgens had been working under Carlin's editorship on *Superman*, he says their collaboration on *Metal Men* actually predates that.

"I wanted to work on something visually different, and there's nothing like them in comics. When I saw the *Metal Men* as a kid, the neatest thing was that there were six 'people,' different colors, that could stretch and move —they were real fluid—and there was *nothing* like them," says Jurgens.

The title's revival actually began six years ago, but was (and is still) delayed for several reasons. The mini-series, though, is expected to be published this year. "There were numerous editorial holdups. The book started out being edited by Andy Helfer. After about two years, it moved over to Kevin Dooley. It has always been designed as a side project for Dan and me," explains Carlin. "There was never any schedule. It was always something that we would do when we had a break, or whatever. In a way, I'm happy, because I think some projects suffer when they're being pushed to come out and they're *not* done."

Like Jurgens, Carlin says he was always a fan of the six robotic heroes—Gold, Tin, Lead, Iron, Mercury and Platinum.

"I loved the old series, I think, because they had such distinct personalities. Even though they were a little too two-dimensional, they were very broad, and I responded to that, because there wasn't much stuff like that in comics. Marvel Comics back then were a bit deeper and heavier, and granted, the rest of DC characters were a little cardboard, but these six character really ran the gamut. *Metal Men* was a lot of fun to read. And, it has actually turned out to be more fun to write. I don't know if it's going to be more fun to letter, because there are a lot of word balloons with six characters!" laughs Carlin.

The Metal Men's original title was subjected to several cancellations and revivals with various significant changes along the way. One revival even saw them disguised as humans, complete with secret identities. Carlin is quick to assure readers that these are the *original* Metal Men.

"Everything that has happened in the past that you liked is still there. If you didn't like it, we're not going to bring it up. We're not going to undo anything," says Carlin.

Possibly coming to a comic shop near you: *The Metal Men*, that highly elemental team of (left to right) Lead, Gold, Iron, Dr. Will Magnus, Tin, Platinum and Mercury (who's the only metal liquid at room temperature).

WE AREN'T GOING TO HANG AROUND HERE WAITING FOR THE END OF THE WORLD!
FORM ON ME, METAL MEN!
IT'S TIME FOR A NUMBER FIFTY-SEVEN!
WATCH OUT CHEMO!
HERE WE COME!!!

Art: John Byrne/Dick Giordano/Colors: Tom Zuko

"If they're going into action, and they're twirling and swirling and moving all around each other," says artist Dan Jurgens, "that makes it fun."

The Metal Men are among the most popular DC characters not yet subject to a revival. Still, their appearances in the past dozen years have been exceedingly rare, which puzzles Carlin.

"I don't know why—I don't know what DC was thinking before I got there," he says. "But I fear that the Metal Men may have been a little too silly for some people, and as comics have been getting more and more serious in recent years, they would be the last guys to be revitalized—which is also part of the fun for me!"

Originally, the Metal Men were destroyed and re-constructed on a fairly regular basis, but Carlin says there will be some changes in that process: "It's a little schizophrenic—much like Magnus' personality has been. It's definitely going to be light in terms of the humor. The first issue, in particular, will be a lot like the old days, until something bad happens at the end, when the whole series' tone shifts. Hopefully, it'll make them more interesting characters, and more—this sounds weird—more realistic, in terms of mortality.

"There didn't seem to be any reason to care if the Metal Men survived or got damaged in an adventure, because they could just build a new one. This time it will be *different*."

Artwork on *Metal Men* will be "wide open," according to Jurgens. "The thing about the Metal Men is that they're all different colors, but it's one solid color—and it makes for a very colorful book. If they're all six there, and they're going into action, and they're twirling and swirling and moving around each other, all you need is the color. They move right across the page. The minute that they stop standing still, they're not people anymore—they become human ribbons," says Jurgens. "That makes it fun. They're Play-Doh!"

Brett Breeding is inking the book, and Jurgens says he's happy with the results so far. "The first cover looks fantastic. Brett is so good on everything that he does—he's so good with textures. And even though they're all metal, each one of them has a different feel and tone."

This mini-series will produce significant changes in the title characters. "There *will* be a difference by the time it's all said and done," Jurgens promises.

"As Mike says, we're raising the stakes for the Metal Men. The risk factor is going to increase for them dramatically—and there might even be some new Metal Men! And there might

(continued on page 68)

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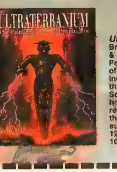

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Regular pencilling requires long hours and dedication, and for artist Patrick Olliffe, "My main concern is *Nomad*."

As for what he wants to do, the artist notes, "You know, I'm still Joe Pencil-for-Hire."

Drawing comics is what Patrick Olliffe always wanted to do.

By CRAIG W. FREY, JR.

Patrick Olliffe doesn't come off like a comic book artist. He doesn't command the authority of a veteran like Jack "King" Kirby, nor does he have the flashy hipness of some of today's superstars. He falls somewhere in the middle, as if consciously avoiding any extreme. Even the journey to his current assignment as penciller of Marvel Comics' *Nomad* was a calm, moderate, but convoluted one.

Not long ago, Olliffe wasn't even in the comics scene, so to speak. He was just another kid going to art school with plans on becoming a freelance illustrator.

"I went to the Art Institute of Pittsburgh after high school and spent two years there learning whatever they had to teach me as far as commercial art and illustration. Originally, I had gone primarily to do comics, but once I got there, my horizons kind of opened up.

Photos & All Art Courtesy Patrick Olliffe

By the time I was ready to graduate, it became a choice between 'Do I want to become a freelance artist, or do I want to draw comics?' "

It wasn't a decision that took long to make. As luck would have it, Olliffe sent samples of his work to Malibu Graphics, which was "brand-spanking new" in 1987, and they made him the artist of their black-and-white flagship title, *Stealth Force*, which is now being adapted as a film by Planet 3 Entertainment Group.

"I had my first freelance job at a comic book company with three weeks left to go at art school. So, I said, 'Well, this bit first, so I'm going to go this way.' I didn't follow up with illustration, and off I went into comics."

The assignment was a dream come true for Olliffe, a comics fan since he was "about five or six," when he saw a certain artist's work for the first time.

"Once I discovered Neal Adams, I was hooked," he says, sitting casually in the Pittsburgh studio he shares with his fiancée. "The reason I'm doing comics today is because of his work on *The Avengers*, specifically 'The Kree-Skrull War.' My father's friend collected comics and he showed this stuff to me. I was so blown away by it that I was an instant Adams fan. It still shows up in my work occasionally."

Thor Art: Patrick Olliffe/Al Milgrom

" 'Asgard' has a much broader story to tell," explains Olliffe. "It's larger than life."

Stealth Force lasted only eight issues, but there was little time for Olliffe to wonder what was next. Impressed with his work, Malibu immediately assigned him to a new title. *The Argonauts*, a near-future, science-fiction/horror yarn, had an even shorter run of four issues, but it led directly to one of the most satisfying assignments of Olliffe's early career.

"After *The Argonauts* came to an end, *Frankenstein* hit. That has been one of the highest, purest examples of what I could do artistically, at least at that point. Especially the third [and final] issue. Everyone said that they could see my growth [as an artist] from issue #1 to #3, which was very nice, but it wasn't true. In issue #1, I experimented with a technique that would be more graphic—just laying down brush strokes with no outline, that sort of thing. It wasn't working, though, and I started to get away from it in issue #2 by putting more line work in. By #3, I had abandoned it completely and went back to my illustrative line work. That caused some people to say, 'Hey, I could see your growth through the issues,' which is fine, but that's *not* what happened. At any rate, I'm really proud of my work on *Frankenstein*, and whatever else happens to me as a comics artist, that will be a shining point in my career."

Frankenstein was a critical and public success, eventually compiled as a graphic novel. After that, Olliffe wanted to expand his horizons and "see what else was out there. I felt I

"I'm still trying to find my place when it comes to *Nomad*," says Olliffe.

All Nomad Inked Art: Patrick Olliffe/Mark McKenna

***Frankenstein* "has been one of the highest, purest examples of what I can do artistically," the artist says.**

***Nomad* is "a street-level story," explains Olliffe. "He's not going to go flying around anywhere under his own power."**

All Nomad Characters & Art: Trademark & Copyright 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group

had done all that I could at Eternity/Malibu, and I wanted to move on."

In order to "branch out," he entered into a short and, as he calls it, "unimpressive" tenure at Innovation Comics. Next was a sojourn into motion-picture animation, specifically the animated sequences of *Creepshow 2*.

"I basically did some ink-and-paint work. Primarily, I painted cels, and I inked some as well. It sounds much more exciting than it was, though it was very interesting work to do. I also worked on the Tom Petty video 'Runnin' Down a Dream,' and a children's special called *Alison and the Magic Bubble*. In all of these, I did ink-and-paint work. I enjoyed the experience, but I don't think it's something I would go back to."

The thought of a return, however, exposes a moment of wishful thinking. "If I were to go back to animation, it would probably be in a larger capacity, like if I were to direct," he says. "Of course, I would need a hell of a lot of training to do something like that, which is why it's *not* going to happen. At least not today."

Following his stint in animation, Olliffe hooked up with TSR, the company most famous for its *Dungeons & Dragons* role-playing games, as they began a short-lived exercise in the comics field. He pencilled and sometimes inked a four-part gore-fest written by Marv Wolfman called *R.I.P.* Dubbed "Comics Modules" by TSR, each issue came with a mini-role-playing game, including a board, rules and cut-out game pieces. Olliffe won't say much about the project, except that it was "too gory for my taste."

Not long after finishing *R.I.P.*, he finally heard from one of the companies he had sent samples to at the beginning of his comics career. "Once I got in with Malibu, I got away from sending stuff to Marvel or DC, and I followed this strange path that led back to Marvel years later. I had shown some of my work to Ron Frenz [artist of *The Mighty Thor*, with whom Olliffe had worked on *Creepshow 2*]. He showed it to the powers-that-be at Marvel, and they liked it enough to give me a two-part back-up story that, unfortunately, never saw print. I went on to TSR, and after that, it looked like there was going to be another "Tales of Asgard' series in *Thor*. Ron and I had stayed in touch, so I told him that I would be interested in doing it, and that was really how it started."

"Tales of Asgard" began in *Thor* #437 and ran through the title's summer 1991 bi-weekly issues. Olliffe also filled in for Frenz on issues #445 and #446 [which had no "Tales" back-ups], then resumed "Tales" with #447. He and Frenz collaborated on the covers

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After pencilling two unpublished Marvel back-up stories, Olliffe was given a "Tales of Asgard" storyline.

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For Olliffe, *Frankenstein* "will be a shining point in my career."

Pencil art Patrick Olliffe

Confronted on his "conservative storytelling," Olliffe was delighted to go experimental.

of *Thor* #442 and #449. "Tales of Asgard" was Olliffe's only regular work for Marvel until his current assignment, *Nomad*, came along.

"Originally, they only needed somebody to do fill-in work on *Nomad*, so I did it. Then, for this-and-that reason, I was hired on as a regular."

He's new to working for a major comics company on a regular title, so he's still trying to get comfortable with *Nomad*. After "Tales of Asgard," Olliffe realized that there was a world of difference between the characters of Thor and Nomad, and he had to make some stylistic changes.

" 'Tales of Asgard' has a much broader story to tell," he explains. "You're dealing with characters who have super-powers. They pick up really heavy things and throw them at each other. It's larger than life. Nomad is earthbound. He's not going to go flying around anywhere under his own power. It's a street-level story.

"Since I came from the independents, I was able to play around with panel layouts, and many times do whatever I wanted. When I got to Marvel with 'Tales of Asgard,' I was still using more experimental layouts. Tom DeFalco ["Asgard" writer] didn't like that so much, and he asked me to use a more straightforward style, so I made the layouts more conservative. So, now I'm on *Nomad*, and [writer] Fabian Nicieza and [editor] Glenn Herdling tell me that my storytelling is *too* conservative. They ask me to get more experimental with my panel layouts, which is fine with me, since that's what I was doing when I was with the independents.

"I'm still trying to find my place when it comes to *Nomad*," he explains further, having thus far only pencilled four issues. "The character is still new to me, and I'm trying to acclimate to his situation. The sensibilities between 'Tales of Asgard' and *Nomad* are so vast that the transition hasn't always been smooth for me."

One thing that helped ease the change from one title to the other for Olliffe was the chance to draw Daredevil in *Nomad* #6. Even that held some surprises for him.

"Daredevil has always been one of my favorite characters, and I was really looking forward to drawing him specifically," he reveals. "The precursor to doing the whole 'Dead Man's Hand' crossover [which ran through *Nomad*, *Daredevil* and *The Punisher War Journal*] was, 'Gee, I *finally* get to draw Daredevil.' But as I drew, I found that I got more comfortable drawing the Punisher [in *Nomad* #5 and #6]. I got the chance to do things with that white skull on his chest, like black out the

(continued on page 68)

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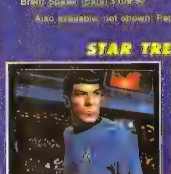

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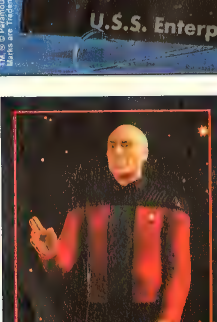

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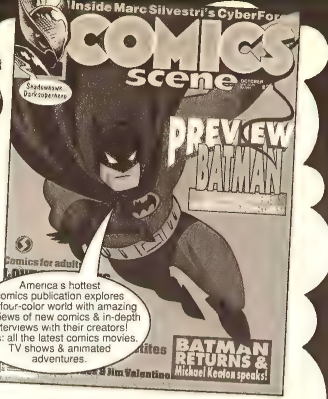
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Counterparts

(continued from page 44)

The Petrucha-Crain team functioned so well that they decided to re-team on another project for Epic Comics. "*Lance Barnes, Post-Nuke Dick* is the further adventures of the detective who's responsible for blowing up the world," says Crain. "It begins with Lance in a sort of 'James Bond vs. Blofeld' scene. He beats the villain and tries to prevent a nuclear missile from launching and starting World War III. He's presented with a red wire and a green wire—and he cuts the *wrong* wire!

"That scenario is repeated throughout the book. He's always faced with red wire-green wire decisions, and he carries around his bad luck pliers in case he gets a chance to redeem himself. I really like Lance. I'm working on the second episode. The whole subtext of the second episode is that Lance has run out of cigarettes—there are no more cigarettes left in the post-apocalyptic world, so he's having a nicotine fit the entire time! He pretty much sells his soul for a box of cigarettes. Lance goes to Missing Bit City, where you can only get in if you're missing a body part—*déjà vu*, eh? Lance pretends to have an eye missing by wearing his girl friend's bra over his head like an eyepatch."

"I was concerned when Epic wanted to pick up *Lance Barnes* that it was too much like *Counterparts*, but they really liked the idea," says Petrucha. "I hope people don't stereotype me as the 'limb' writer! It was more or less an accident.

"*Lance Barnes* is a little less complicated plot-wise than *Counterparts*, but it's in the same satirical vein. I'm hoping *Lance* readers will pick up *Counterparts*, and vice versa. Barry's work on *Lance Barnes* is just as great as his art in *Counterparts*—it's a little cleaner, a slightly different style, but he has got it down really well. He's going to surprise many people when the books come out!"

"Most of the comics I look at out there take themselves way too seriously. That has its place, but I like funny books, like the things that Hilary [*What th-?!*] Barta and Mark Martin do. It was the humor that attracted me to *Counterparts*," reveals Barry Crain.

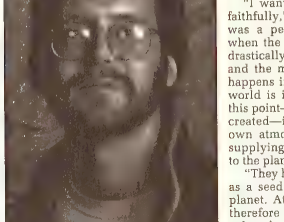
The humor in *Counterparts* has a slight edge to it, however. "It's a satire, but it's also an honest-to-gosh action-adventure story with a group of heroes," says Stefan Petrucha. "There's political and social commentary at the same time, which falls squarely in the realm of satire, as opposed to farce. *Counterparts* tries to have a point to its humor!"

Island

(continued from page 28)

there just hasn't been anything else strong enough to displace them in that kids' marketplace. But, I can't figure what the characteristics are that are so popular with kids.

"I talked to [artist] Steve Bissette, and he has this theory that the Turtles are a family kids can relate to and identify with. There's a strong sense of family between the four brothers—the father figure being Splinter, of course.



***Dino Island* was created "to work in everything I like to draw," explains Lawson. That includes dinosaurs, fighter planes and flying saucers.**

Also, it might be that there have been so many different creative interpretations of the Turtles. Even within the black-and-white book, there have been so many artists, each of whom gave their own idea as to what the Turtles are, from Kevin and Pete on one extreme to Mike Zulli on the other. The first time you hear the title, it's so goofy. No one knows why it's still so popular."

What Lawson definitely does know is how everyone and everything wound up on *Dino Island*. And, he's about to cough it up, so if you want to leave all of the second issue's surprises intact, you've reached the end of this article. Bye.

Lawson's reference to his explanation as a "theory" implies that you have the choice whether or not to accept it. That's not actually the case. What happens in the second installment is more along the lines of your basic Rod Serling "pull back to reveal *alienus ex machina*."

"In the second issue, it comes out that these aliens have grown this planet as kind of a product to sell prospective clients," Lawson says. "Instead of terra-forming new worlds, these two aliens are custom-designing planets. They have an intergalactic service, supplying clients with the planets of their choice. The client can choose atmosphere, geology and life forms. These aliens have been using Earth as their model, so this sample planet is a model of Earth. It sounds kind of goofy."

Yeah, just like Donatello and friends. A regular employee at Mirage Studios knows better than to rule out the improbable, such as having a comic he dreamed up strictly for fun become the hottest thing since washable clothes. "Actually, I *have* left it open," he admits.

"I wanted to model it after Earth faithfully," Lawson continues. "There was a period in Earth's prehistory when the atmosphere changed rather drastically and the dinosaurs died out and the mammals rose up. So, what happens in the comic is, because this world is in an underfoliated state at this point—it's a pretty new world, just created—it's unable to maintain its own atmosphere. So, the aliens are supplying the atmosphere artificially to the planet.

"They have this thing they've set up as a seed, which actually grows the planet. At the end, the seed dies, so therefore the planet, being underdeveloped, can't really create its own atmosphere to replace the artificial one. In the last few pages, I've got the planet drastically growing hotter and the plants and dinosaurs all dying. But, there are still these people on the planet. And, I've left it open as to whether they can survive this kind of climatic change. So, although it's a grim note to close on, the story *is* open for further issues."

Well, a grim conclusion is what we've come to anticipate. Whenever you fall in love with eons-old reptilians, whether in *The Giant Behemoth* or *Fantasia*, you know you're in for heartbreak. You also know some guy carrying a pick-axe and a sack of bones will rain on the parade, too, telling you that these monsters don't look *anything* like real thunder lizards.

"Like I say, I'm pretty loose with that stuff," Jim Lawson says. "As a matter of fact, Pete Laird is a real dinosaur nut, and he's like: 'Oh, Jim, your triceratops feet are totally wrong. They look *human* or something.' But I like drawing them that way, with these big flat feet. And I have these things that are basically ceratosaurs, carnivorous bipeds, but once again, they're not even close to being anatomically correct, I wouldn't think. I would be shocked if they were."

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Olliffe

(continued from page 60)

rest of his uniform completely instead of leaving blue highlights, which can be really striking. There are things about his character, visually speaking, that I would do differently now, like make him broader. I don't think my Punisher was broad enough. John Romita, Jr. is doing the definitive Punisher right now, and I would try to take my cues from him. So, I started out wanting to do Daredevil and ended up falling in love with the Punisher."

Going to Marvel from the independents market may seem to some like a step in the wrong direction, but Olliffe doesn't feel like he's going against the grain. "From my own point-of-view, I look at it as, 'Would I be doing this, or would I be in the commercial art field?' If I were in commercial art, I would be working for a client. Marvel Comics is my client as an illustrator. So, even though comics are a unique field, it's still a commercial art field, and my editor is my client. On the other hand, I'm not trying to get any projects of my own through, so I haven't had to butt heads with anybody. You know, I'm still Joe Pencil-For-Hire."

Contemplating possible future projects, Olliffe becomes evasive and whimsical at the same time. He eludes the direct question, instead focusing on characters he would like to draw and some writers with whom he wants to work.

"One of the goals that I had was to get regular on a book, and now I'm regular on *Nomad*," he says. "I'm working on my speed, so I can eventually ink my own work. When I told that to [current *Nomad* inker] Mark McKenna, he said, 'That's what all you guys [pencillers] want to do.' There are some things I wish I could do, though.

"For DC, I would *love* to do Batman. It's great to see his character become more accepted as he returns to his darker origins. At Marvel, it runs the gamut of characters I grew up with. Captain America is one of my all-time favorites, as well as the Fantastic Four, Daredevil and now the Punisher.

"When it comes to writers, *Frankenstein*'s Martin Powell and I click very well, and I would like to work with him again. I really admire Roger Stern and Frank Miller, and Chuck Dixon, who's doing an incredible job on *Punisher War Journal*. I would enjoy working with any of them. I'm also a big fan of J.M. DeMatteis."

Patrick Olliffe isn't sure what the future holds for him, but it's clear that he has enjoyed the ride so far. As for now, "My main concern is *Nomad*, and I'm focusing *all* my energies on meeting my deadlines."

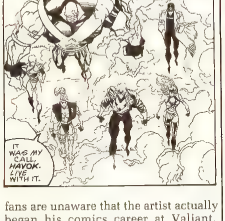
Quesada

(continued from page 32)

I could do that again,' but it's the kind of thing that people do once in a career, a virgin project. I don't know if I could approach anything with that kind of innocence again."

Quesada feels such a strong affinity for the character that he would like to pencil the next *Ray* mini-series for DC, but says that regrettably, his other commitments make it impossible. "There are some people who really want to do the book, people who I would really like to see do it. They've asked me to be involved in several ways. Somewhere down the line, I feel like I'll have to come back to that character one day and try it again."

In addition to all of his other projects, Quesada continues to do *Sofa* covers for Valiant Comics each month out of admiration and loyalty; many



fans are unaware that the artist actually began his comics career at Valiant. "My background was *not* in comic books—it was in painting and illustration," he says. "They gave me my first break coloring Nintendo books, which was what they were putting out at the beginning, months before *Magnus*. I got my start there, and I would like to keep my foot in the door. I have many friends over there, and I love what they're doing."

Comics are still very fresh for the hot artist, and he says he doesn't have any problem with burnout.

"The only time it gets to the point where it's not fresh has been when I've been swamped with stuff, and I can't think anymore. I'll think, 'Oh my God, I've drawn this particular face at this three-quarters shot a dozen times already, I've got to think of something new!' Obviously, there's only so many things you can do.

"I've worked a lot of boring, terrible jobs in my time," says Joe Quesada. "Now, I wake up in the morning, roll out of bed, sit down at a drawing table and draw funny books. I can't think of a better way to live—it's always exciting for me to get to that next page!"

Metal Men

(continued from page 55)

be other changes, too, along with deep secrets that will be revealed."

Some of the secrets will revolve around the responsometers—the mysterious devices that give each of the robots their personalities.

"The big secrets all revolve around what the responsometer is, what it does, *how* it connects to the Metal Men and their personalities and where their personalities came from," says Carlin.

Although they enjoy each of the characters, the team admits to some slight favorites.

"I liked Lead, because I don't have to spell as well," laughs Carlin.

"Lead is definitely my favorite, too," agrees Jurgens. "I've made him rounder, even bigger and fatter. There's something about a character that goes 'Duhh' throughout the entire thing that's a lot of fun. I can give him the goofiest expressions. Mercury is my second favorite."

"Gold and Iron are a little straight as characters, which is OK, because they contrast," Carlin notes. "They're not as broad, and not as much fun to do, but I find they're necessary to the mix."

The relationship between Magnus and Tina, the lovesick Platinum robot, has always been one of the strangest and potentially kinkiest, in all of comics. "We have some secrets there, too. There are some skeletons in the closet!" Carlin exclaims. "I have to say, I actually find Tina to be very cute. But I'm going to feel guilty if my wife reads this!"

"He won't feel guilty, he'll feel weird!" says Jurgens.

"My responsometer's going off!" Carlin laughs.

For a brief moment, however, Carlin turns serious in pondering the possibility of a follow-up monthly.

"I would love to see a regular series even if it *didn't* sell well!" jokes Carlin. "I don't know if anybody else would want it. It's a lot of fun. Dan's art is great, it's fun to play off these characters and I really think that this is going to humanize the characters a lot. And if there's a regular series, there are many personalities to drive the series, and to play with, so it could be really fun. With six characters, there are plenty of ideas."

As Carlin looks ahead to the Metal Men's future, Jurgens turns to the past to pay tribute to the title's creators.

"Bob Kanigher and Ross Andru did *such* a great job," says Dan Jurgens. "If they hadn't done such a great job, we wouldn't have cared."

"*Metal Men* is one of my favorite series from the old days," adds Mike Carlin. "Hopefully, the world is ready for it again!"

COMICS screen

All of these upcoming projects are live-action unless specified. Those boxed are new or updated since last listing. **Not everything listed will *ever* be made.** Legend: S: script; D: director; P: producer; EP: executive producer; C: creator; AN: animated; LA: live-action; Syn: syndicated; HB: Hanna-Barbera; Nel: Nelvana; MWS: Murakami Wolf Swenson; RB: Rankin-Bass; WD: Disney; WB: Warner Bros.; PR: Paramount; U: Universal; DH: Dark Horse; L: Largo; Col: Columbia; Am: Amblin; FF: Funnybook Films. **Attn. all pros:** Info to be added to this list is cheerfully invited. Send to COMICS SCENE, 475 Park Ave. South, 8th Flr., NY, NY 10016. (Info as of 1/4/93)

❑ **Addams Family.** Sequel. PP. To start filming shortly. AN series. ABC. HB.

Ace of the Newsreels. Film. S: Pam Hickey, Dennys McCoy.

The Airtight Garage. AN. S: Randy Lofficier.

Alias. Film. U. S: David S. Goyer. P: P. Lenkov, S. Daniel.

ALIENS vs. Predator. Film. DH/Fox.

The American. Film. DH/L.

Animaniacs. AN syn TV. WB/Am. Fall '93.

Annie. Film. *Annie & the Castle of Terror.* D: Lewis Gilbert. Rastar. Stage musical sequel. *Annie Warbucks.* Opens Broadway March. C: Charnin, Meehan, Strouse.

Archie. LA Film. S: N. & D. Ephron. DIC.

Baby Huey. AN short. U. S: Bill Kopp.

Bad Baby. AN TV. Imag.

Barbarella. LA film. Nel.

Barbie. Film. Abrams/ Gentile Ent. & Mattel.

❑ **Batman.** AN series. Fox. (see article)

The Black Cat. Film. Sean Young.

Blackhawk. Film. Am. S: Dan Avkroyd.

❑ **Blankman.** Film. C: Damon Wayans. Eric Gold. Sony.

Black Panther. Film. W/Wesley Snipes. D: John Singleton. P: Brad Weston, Bob Beitcher. Sony.

Blade. Film.

Dinosaurs Art: Remmer/Trademark & Copyright 1992 Tom Mason

They're tough, they're prehistoric, they're *Dinosaurs for Hire*. (And they're in development for animation).

Blondie. Film. WB. P: Joel Silver.

Bonkers D. Bobcat. Syn AN series. WD. Fall '93.

Boogiemanland. AN. Fox.

Brave Little Toaster. AN film sequel. Hyperion.

Bugs Bunny. *Termite Terrace.* LA/AN film. WB.

Casper. Film. Am. U.

Cobalt 60. AN film.

Concrete. Film. S: (D) L. Wilson. C. Thompson. P: Tim Burton. DH.

❑ **The Crow.** Film. S: John Shirley. D: Alex Proyas. P: Ed Pressman. W/Brandon Lee. To shoot shortly.

Dan Dare. TV series.

Danger Squad. Film. P/D: Leo Fong. W/D: P.R. Cable.

❑ **Daredevil.** TV. Lorimar. Fox.

Crusader Rabbit. New AN series. In development. Fox.

❑ **Cyberpunk.** Film. S: Steve Roberts. D: Rene Manzor. Imagination Factory.

❑ **Deadworld.** Film. S: Mark Pavia (D), Jack O'Donnell (P). Summer '94. Dementia Brothers Pictures.

Deathlok. Film.

Dennis the Menace. Film. P/S: John Hughes. D: Nick Castle. W/Walter Matthau, Chris Lloyd, Lea Thompson. WB. Summer '93. *Dennis the Musical.* S: E. Chambers. Music: Jeff Church. Lyrics: R. Enquist, Chambers.

Dinosaurs for Hire. AN series. In development. Fox.

Dr. Off. Film. Spoof. P: Tim Reid. Miramax.

❑ **Dr. Strange.** Film. S/D: Wes Craven. FF Coppola project *not* granted film rights to character.

Duckman. AN. C: Everett Peck. Klasky Csupo.

Dudley Do-Right. Film. PP.

❑ **Elektra Assassin.** Film. TriStar.

Elfquest. Film/TV. Abby Lou Prod. Freedom Distrib.

Evangeline. Film. FF.

❑ **Exosquad.** AN TV series. U.

Family Dog. AN series. Am/Nel. Debut delayed.

❑ **Fantastic Four.** Film. Neue Constantin/Concorde. Lensing. (see item)

Fearless Fosdick. AN film. Nel.

Flaming Carrot. Film. Tundra/Limelight.

❑ **The Flintstones.** Film. Fred: John Goodman. U/Am. D: Brian Levant. S: Jim Jennewein, Tom Parker, Gary Ross. P: Bruce Cohen, Colin Wilson. AN TV film. ABC. *I Yabba-Yabba-Doo.* Pebbles & Bamm-Bamm marry. AN TV sequel. (They have twins).

G.I. Joe. Film. S/D: Sheldon Lettich. P: Anthony & John Gentile, Martin Abrams, Gene Kirkwood. WB.

The Green Falcon. TV. Am. C: Mick Garris.

The Green Hornet. Film.

Hopalong Cassidy. Film. S: G. Popper, J. Rosenthal.

Iron Man. Film.

Jonny Quest. AN TV movie. *Jonny's Golden Quest.* HB.

Judge Dredd. Film.

Kings in Disguise. Film. DH.

❑ **The Lion King.** AN film. WD. Nov. '94.

The Hollywood Four

Mr. Fantastic, the Thing, the Human Torch and the Invisible Woman will zoom into theaters between summer's end and Christmas 1993. They are, of course, *The Fantastic Four*, in a low-budget adaptation of the "World's Greatest Comics Magazine" created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby.

The film, budgeted at $4 million, is a co-production between Roger Corman's Concorde Pictures and the Germany-based Neue Constantin Productions, longtime owner of the comic's movie rights (and the maker of *Das Boot* and *The Name of the Rose*).

Directed by Oley Sassone from a Craig Nevius script, *The Fantastic Four* began lensing on a 25-day shooting schedule December 28 on various Los Angeles locations. Steve Rabiner is the film's producer.

Leading the team as Reed Richards is Alex Hyde-White, best known for his role in the *Indiana Jones & the Last Crusade* pre-credits sequence. (By the way, he's the real-life son of the late British character actor Wilfrid Hyde-White, seen in *Buck Rogers, Battlestar Galactica, Ten Little Indians* and *The Magic Christian*).

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Michael Bailey Smith is Ben Grimm with Rebecca Staab as Susan Storm. Jay Underwood, who has had some aerial experience as *The Boy Who Could Fly*, plays Johnny Storm. And Joseph Culp portrays Dr. Doom.

Optic Nerve (*The Dark Half*) created the Thing, Dr. Doom and Mole Man makeups and suits as well as various mechanical FX. Post-production, computer graphics and ultra-matrix FX will provide the heroes' elastic, flame and invisible abilities.

Typically, the movie draws on the comic's early issues, adapting the FF's origin and first adventures while making a variety of changes in the mythos' specific details. The storyline, according to Concorde spokesman Mike Elliott, starts with "the four in college, then jumps 10 years in the future where they all become astronauts and are struck by the Colossus Ray which turns them into the Fantastic Four. After that, they go on to battle the comic-book bad guy Dr. Doom."

—Marc Shapiro

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Ultraman Art: Ken Steacy/Tsuburaya Productions Ltd. Copyright 1993 Tsuburaya Productions Ltd.

Ultraman returns to American comics this month in Harvey's first superhero title in more than 25 years. Meanwhile, the new *Ultraman* series may get a further 26-episode go-ahead.

Lone Wolf & Cub. Film. D: John Bruno. P: Ed Pressman. S: Bill Wisher.

Lucky Luke. TV series. Terence Hill. SB Comm.

Mai the Psychic Girl. Film. D: Tim Burton. S: L. Wilson, C. Thompson. P: Burton, Wilson, D. Di Novi, W. Hill.

Mandrake. Film.

❑ **The Mask.** Film. New Line. S/D: Chuck Russell.

❑ **The Men in Black.** Film. Col. P: Walter Parkes, Laurie McDonald.

❑ **The Meteor Man.** Film. S/D: R. Townsend. MGM. March.

Mr. Magoo. Film. Am/WB.

Mr. X. Film. P: Jim Cash & Jack Epps Jr.

Nancy. Film. P: P. Muller.

Neil the Horse. AN/LA.

Ninja High School. AN video. U.K. Sun Planning.

1-800-Monster. TV. USA. EP/S: Jonathan Betuel.

Pagemaster. AN film. Fox/HB. W/ Macaulay Culkin, Christopher Lloyd.

Joe Palooka. TV pilot. NBC. Viacom. P: Dean Hargrove.

Paparazzi Samurai. AN TV series. P: DIC, Abrams/Gentile.

❑ **Peanuts.** LA film. P/S: John Hughes. WB.

The Phantom. Film. PP. P: B. Sherlock, P. Sjoquist, J. Torv, R. Price, R. Evans. S: K. Shadie.

Plastic Man. Film. WB/Am. S: L. Wilson. D: B. Spicer.

❑ **Pocahontas.** AN film. WD. Spring '94.

Prince Valiant. AN series. Family Chan. LA film. S: M. Beckner. N. Constantin Film. P: B. Eichinger, J. Gorman.

Radio Boy. AN. RB.

Red Sonja. TV. Lancit.

Reid Fleming. Film. S: creator David Boswell. P: M. Weisman, J. Loeb II.

Richie Rich. Film. P: J. Silver, J. Davis. S: Neil Tolkin.

RoboCop 3. S: Frank Miller & Fred Dekker (D). Summer.

Roger Rabbit. New AN short "Trail Mix Up." WD.

Rupert the Bear. AN. Nel.

❑ **The Saint.** Film. S: Terry Hayes. P: Robert Evans. PP. Shoots spring '93.

Sandman. Film.

Scooby Doo. Film. WB.

Secret Agent X-9. AN film.

Sgt. Rock. Film. P: Joel Silver, Bob Zemeckis. WB.

The Shadow. Film. S: David Koepp. P: Martin Bregman.

❑ **Speed Racer.** AN TV series. MWS. Fall '93 bow. Film. D: Patrick Read Johnson. WB.

Spider-Man. Film. D: Jim Cameron. Stage musical. S & lyrics: B. Harman. Music: K. Herrmann. EP: Stan Lee. D: J. Nash, J. Calamari.

Starwatcher. AN film. S: Moebius & J. Fryszman. D: Moebius, Keith Ingham. PP.

❑ **Superman.** *Superman: The New Movie.* S: Cary Bates. May shoot spring.

❑ **Super Mario Bros.** LA film. S: Barry Morrow. D: Rocky Morton, Annabel Jankel. W/ Bob Hoskins. May '93 bow.

Tales from the Hart. TV. P: Aaron Spelling.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. LA sequel. March '93. S/D: Stuart T. Gillard. (see article). AN series. CBS, Syn.

Terry & the Pirates. TV. P: Ben Melniker, Michael Uslan.

Time Cop. Film. D: Sam Raimi. DH/L.

Tom & Jerry. AN film. P/D: Phil Roman.

Trouble with Girls. Film. Fox/FF. S: W. Jacobs, G. Jones. P: M. Pepler, N. Tabachnick.

Valentina. TV series. Demeatra Hampton, Reteitalia.

Vampirella. Film. S/D: Jim Wynorski.

V for Vendetta. Film. WB.

Watchmen. Film.

We're Back. AN film. Am/U. Fall '93.

Why I Hate Saturn. TV.

Wild Cards. Film. Disney. S: George R.R. Martin. P: Michael Engelberg.

❑ **Wild Palms.** TV series; six episodes. C: Bruce Wagner. Indian. Airs spring.

❑ **Wizard of Id.** Film. Cinergi. D: John Hughes (?).

Wolff & Byrd. TV. Lorimar. P: Joel Simon, Bill Todman Jr. EP/D: Joe Dante. For Fox.

Zen. Film. AN series. Ruby-Spears.

Zorro. Film. D: Steven Spielberg. S: Nancy Larson. TriStar. LA TV series. F. Chan. AN TV series. Nel. Broadway musical. P: Fox, Nederlander.

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★ Order 50 copies (**Reg $97**) **$75**
For every 50 copies, you get a free limited glow-in-the-dark Maxx #1!

MARVEL 93' ANNUALS

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Amaz Spidey Ann 27	$2.95/**2.50**
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X-Factor Annual 8	$2.95/**2.50**
★ **Set** - All 5 annuals	$14.75/**9.95**

All 5 annuals at one low price!

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Features art by Bart Sears!

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All new full color 12-issue series!	
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All new violent, full color series! Hot!	
Predator Race War 1,2	2.50/**1.95**
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A Predator hunts a volatile prison!	
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Lobo: Victim 1 (**New!**)	1.75/**1.50**

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IMAGE

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Hot polybagged issue with trading card!	
Youngblood 4 (Liefeld)	1.95/**1.75**
Glow-in-the-dark cover by Liefeld! **Hot!**	
Youngblood Battlezone 1	1.95/**1.50**
Youngblood weapons & equipment!	
Youngblood Strike File 1	2.50/**1.95**

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Amaz Spiderman 377	1.25/ **.99**
Features Cardiac and Styx & Stone!	
Darkhawk 27 (New Warrior)	1.25/ **.99**
Doom 2099 #5 (**New!**)	1.25/ **.99**
Dragonlines 1 (Ron Lim)	2.50/**1.95**
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Fant Four 371 (2nd Print)	2.00/**1.50**
Highlighted by a red embossed cover!	
Ghost Rider 37(Archangel)	1.75/**1.50**
Hulk 400 (2nd Print)	2.50/**1.95**
Hulk 405 (Peter David)	1.25/ **.99**
LawDog 1 (**New!**)	2.50/**1.95**
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Venom Returns Trade	$13/ **9.95**
Wolverine Inner Fury	$6/ **4.95**
Violent new story by Bill Sienkewicz!	
Wolverine Weapon X	$25/**19.95**
Beautiful hardcover by Barry Smith!	
X-Men Masterworks 1	$13/ **9.95**
Contains original 1960's X-Men #1-5!	

POSTERS

Cable Poster (**New!**)	$5/ **4.50**
Death Poster (**New!**)	$5/ **4.50**
Spidey vs. Venom (**New!**)	$5/ **4.50**
Superman Posterbook	$3/ **2.50**
Wolverine (Quesada art)	$5/ **4.50**
X-Men Swimsuit Poster	$5/ **4.50**

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We reserve the right to update prices, limit quantities, & refuse any order. Not responsible for publisher delays! Ad expires 5/1/93. Send $1 for our new catalog after then! **Thanks!**

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Sealed box contains 36 packs (288 cards) plus 1 to 6 true-color, multi-image Hologram cards! **Hot!**	
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The hottest Image babes by the hottest artists!	
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The hot intro of the comic character in CBS's BOB!	
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Highlighted by an embossed silver foil cover! Hot!	
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The Predator stalks a volatile, overcrowded prison!	
Spawn #9 (Neil Gaiman) ...	$1.95/**1.75**
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By Neil (Sandman) Gaiman with McFarlane art!	

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Superman: Poster Gallery (32)	$3/**2.50**
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Wizard Comic Price Guide #20	$4/ **3.50**
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X-Men Cards Series II (Box) .	$36/**24.95**
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X-Men Night of Sentinels Video(New)	**14.95**

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